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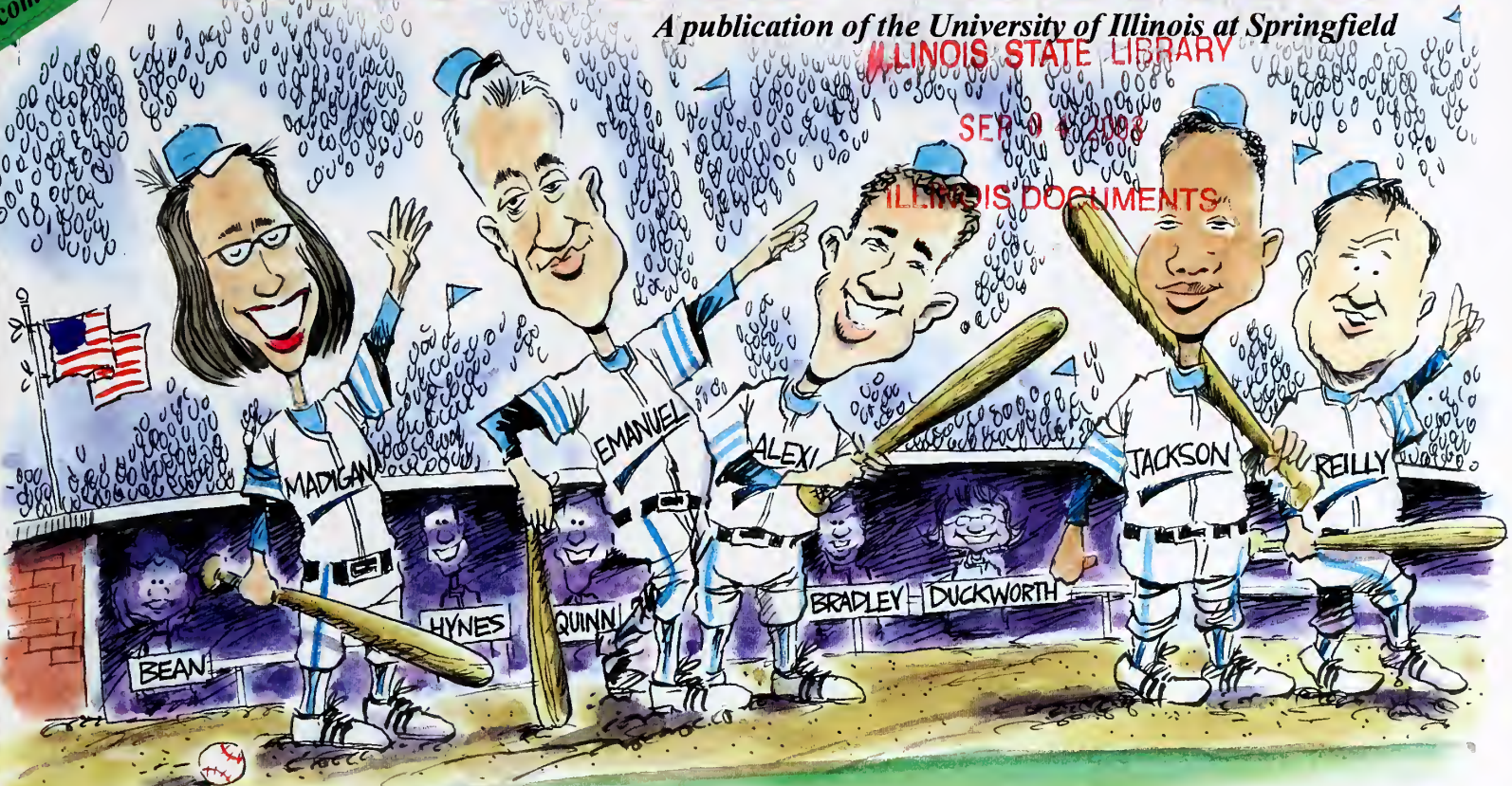
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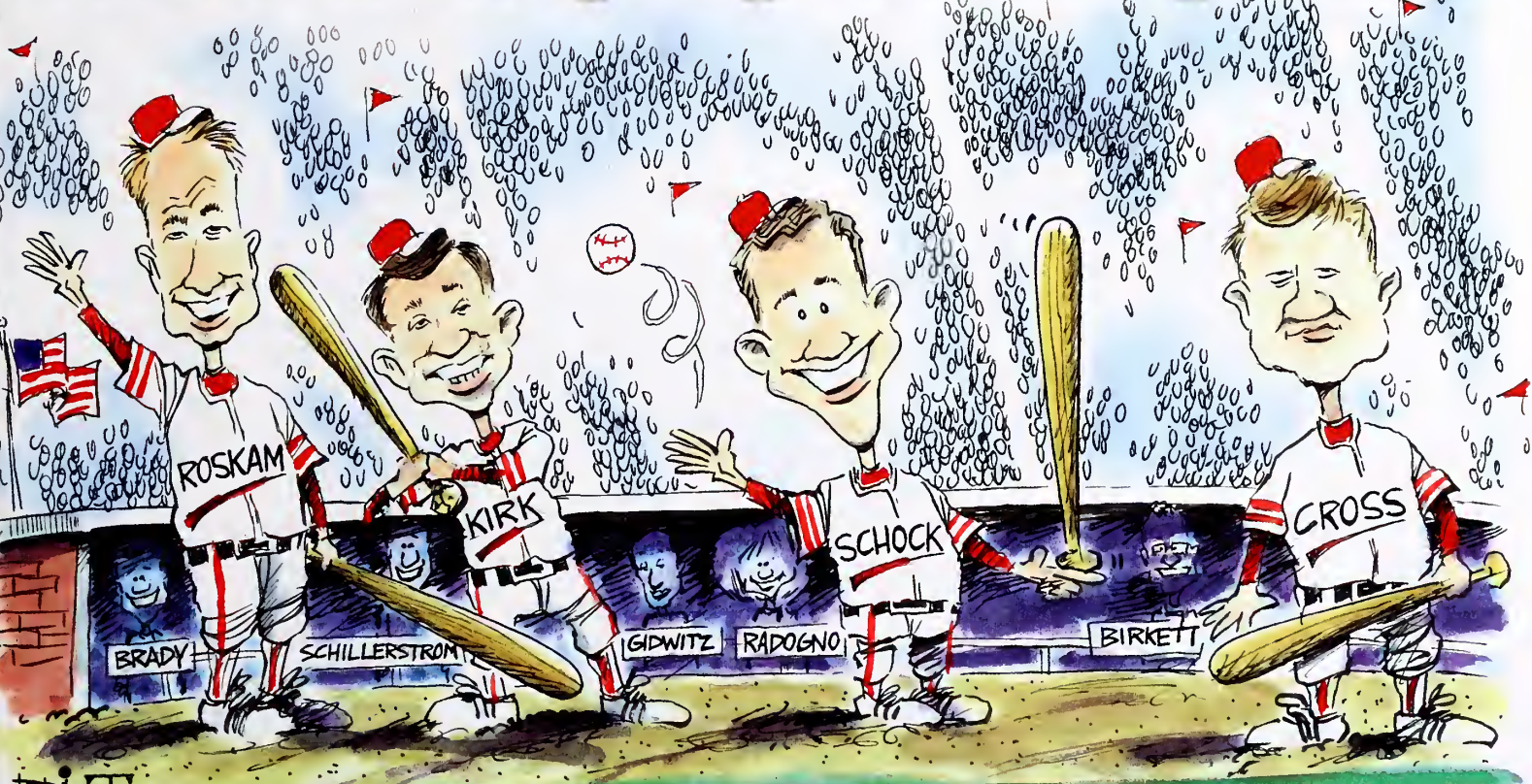
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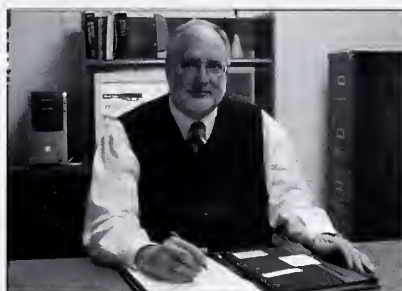
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Dana Heupel



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we might look to the Bulldog**

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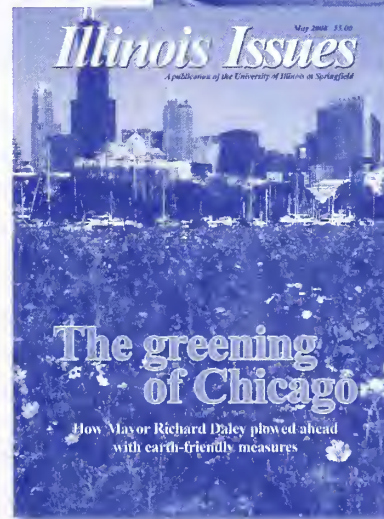
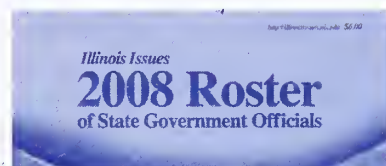
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snapshot in time, not an endorsement of anyone, with the intent to provide some starting points for discussion.

Kristen's look to the future sparked some thoughts of my own about what kind of leadership we need. I was inspired by Celia Sandys' enthralling

and others on their rooting to gain control for himself. Meanwhile, their focus is on winning their own concocted game, not on displaying leadership in trying times.

"Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak; courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen."

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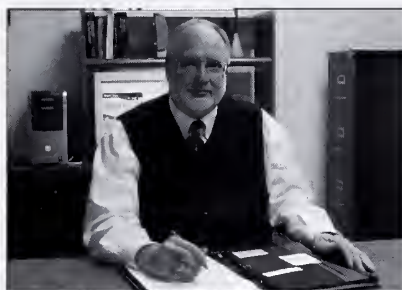
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Dana Heupel



For leadership advice, we might look to the Bulldog

by Dana Heupel

It's increasingly obvious that Illinois suffers from a crisis of leadership. With the last governor in prison, the current one under federal investigation and the three most powerful elected officials mired in political mud, Illinoisans have no one to look to for hope that we can overcome our state's financial and social troubles.

In this month's cover story, Kristen McQueary, columnist and reporter for the Chicago-area *SouthtownStar*, catalogs some of the political players who could emerge to fill that leadership void in the future. As she points out, it's possible — maybe even likely — that someone not on our list could rise to prominence from someplace no one expected. After all, it's unlikely that current Gov. Rod Blagojevich or U.S. Sen. Barack Obama (more on him later) would have been included in such an inventory a decade ago. Our list is simply a snapshot in time, not an endorsement of anyone, with the intent to provide some starting points for discussion.

Kristen's look to the future sparked some thoughts of my own about what kind of leadership we need. I was inspired by Celia Sandys' enthralling

documentary about her grandfather that aired recently on Public Broadcasting Service channels. Who better to lead Illinois out of this crisis than the world's last Renaissance man, the author, painter, venerable statesman and orator Winston Churchill?

So I pored over several books and Internet sites to find out what the British Bulldog might have to say. Let's listen in:

"Politics is not a game. It is an earnest business."

Not here, Sir Winston. It has devolved into a contest of weirdness, wits and will among the state's three most powerful politicians, Blagojevich, House Speaker Michael Madigan and Senate President Emil Jones Jr. A chess match is too genteel of an analogy. King of the Hill fits better, where each is trying to knock the others off their footing to gain control for himself. Meanwhile, their focus is on winning their own concocted game, not on displaying leadership in trying times.

"Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak; courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen."

At the risk of channeling Rodney King, doesn't cooperation generally achieve more results than confrontation? Because Blagojevich, Madigan and Jones can't agree on even the simplest of agendas, they have wasted the incredible opportunity of having one party — in this case the Democrats — control the governor's office and the legislature. Their relationships have become so strained that they can't even sit down and negotiate. It's true that Churchill also said, *"I have always felt that a politician is to be judged by the animosities he excites among his opponents,"* but as fellow Democrats, Blagojevich, Madigan and Jones aren't opponents; they're more like feuding family members. And from some dim memory comes another quotation — not by Winston or Rodney, but I can't recall who — that goes something like: *"In a family squabble, it doesn't matter who's at fault. Just fix it."* Otherwise, the damage to the family can be permanent.

"The nation will find it very hard to look up to the leaders who are keeping their ears to the ground."

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It seems our legislature and governor waste most of their time — when they're not bashing one another — worrying about how their policy decisions will play in Peoria (or Belvidere or Wheaton or Mt. Vernon) rather than following Churchill's observation that *"life is presented to us as a simple choice between right and wrong."*

So it naturally follows that we end up with public servants who care only about being safely re-elected or remaining ensconced in their powerful positions, not about improving the lot of their state's citizens.

The lack of leadership in Illinois must be as obvious to Blagojevich, Madigan and Jones as it is to the rest of us. Yet they don't seem to have any impetus to move together in a more positive direction. *"So they go on in strange paradox, decided only to be undecided, resolved to be irresolute, adamant for drift, solid for fluidity, all-powerful to be impotent."*

Perhaps the dynamic will shift somewhat when Senate Democrats choose a replacement for Jones, who announced his upcoming retirement last month. But they would have to look for a leader who can moderate the conflict between Blagojevich and Madigan, and that could prove to be a tough search. Maybe more of Churchill's words can guide them:

"This is no time for ease and comfort. It is the time to dare and endure," Churchill said. *"You can measure a man's character by the choices he makes under pressure."*

And to the inevitable argument that the philosophies of a 20th century statesman don't apply to 21st century problems, Churchill might have replied, *"The farther backward you can look, the farther forward you are likely to see."*

From the archives

This month's edition also contains an article that Barack Obama wrote for *Illinois Issues* in 1988, when he was a community organizer in Chicago, long before he became a state senator, U.S. senator and presidential candidate.

We wanted to republish it to illustrate Obama's early thoughts and writings and to show how his Illinois roots helped shaped his proposals for a national agenda.

To be fair in this election year, we also looked for Illinois references in early writings of Sen. John McCain and weren't able to find any direct parallels. But we did discover an article McCain wrote for *U.S. News and World Report* in 1973 about his experience as a prisoner of war in Vietnam. It can be found on that magazine's Web site at www.usnews.com/articles/news/2008/01/28/john-mccain-prisoner-of-war-a-first-person-account.html. The link also is available in my editor's note on the Obama article in the print edition of *Illinois Issues* and will be accessible through one click on our Web site at <http://illinoisissues.uis.edu> from my column, as well as my editor's note above the Obama article.

Our decision to republish the Obama article is neither an endorsement of Obama nor of McCain. We remain, as we have been since our founding in 1975, nonpartisan.

Thank you

Inside the front cover of the print magazine, and on our Web site, is a list of people and organizations who have graciously donated to *Illinois Issues* this past year.

We are profoundly grateful for their support. Unlike most other publications, we are a not-for-profit business. A large portion of our funding comes from the University of Illinois at Springfield through its Center for State Policy and Leadership, and we also deeply appreciate that financial assistance. But beyond that, we are expected to be self-sustaining through our subscriptions, newsstand sales, advertising sponsorships and donations.

Without all of those supporters, we would cease to exist. Thanks to all of you who continue to make the state's leading public affairs magazine a reality.

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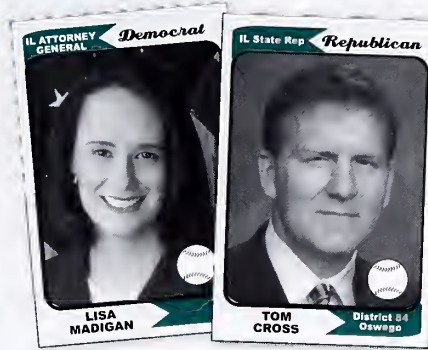
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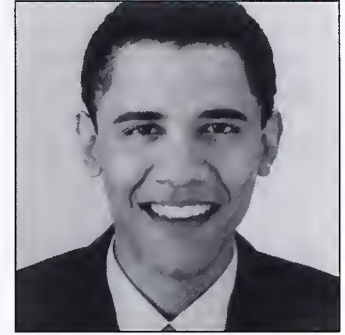
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Bethany Jaeger



Legislators have another starting point, but they must carry through on the compromise

by Bethany Jaeger

A 16-year-old Rochester student tailed Gov. Rod Blagojevich with a video recorder as they walked into the State Fair last month. Surrounded by a group of news reporters, Aaron Mulvey didn't hesitate to call out his question.

"Mr. Governor, I'm a junior at Rochester High School, and I'm still wondering: Three years ago you came to our school and told us we were getting our money. I'm just wondering where it is. We're still on the top of that list."

Clearly caught off guard, the governor stopped, looked toward Mulvey's camera and said: "Uh, yes. Yeah. Look, I want to work with you." He started walking away and looked over his shoulder. "We've got to call those legislators and free up that money. I'm dying to do it."

Mulvey referred to a construction grant Blagojevich promised to his school in 2006, when the governor held a huge pep rally in the gymnasium and announced Rochester was on the top of a waiting list of about two dozen schools. A \$10 million grant would help the district build a new high school.

After Mulvey stopped Blagojevich in his tracks, the high-school junior became the subject of reporters' questions. He said he was in eighth grade at the time of the pep rally. "Yeah, that money's not here, yet."

There have been multiple attempts to approve a major capital program ... but the so-called compromise plans often have turned out to be little more than political tools.

Mulvey added that in retrospect, it probably was just another campaign promise to get re-elected.

Some school districts have been waiting for state matching funds for about five years, repeatedly disappointed as the money gets clogged in the Statehouse.

The reason they haven't gotten their money is the same reason the state is in its ninth year without a major construction plan for roads, bridges, schools and other infrastructure needs. Democratic infighting continues to deepen a fissure between the governor and the House speaker, while the Republican minority switches between acting as a buffer and shrugging its shoulders as if to say, "We can't control the Democrats."

There have been multiple attempts to approve a major capital program, including one as large as \$34 billion, but the so-called compromise plans often have turned out to be little more than

political tools. They allow legislators to go home and tell voters that they, at least, did their part to vote for a capital bill, even if it had no chance of advancing through both chambers.

That might have changed last month. During a special legislative session called by the governor, the House approved a roughly \$1.2 billion capital plan. It would allow the state to tap into federal funds that otherwise sit in Washington, D.C., waiting for a state match.

Meanwhile, House Speaker Michael Madigan also announced that "very good progress" was made in discussions about funding a significant capital program by leasing the Illinois Lottery to private investors, a plan Blagojevich has proposed more than once.

The two events, together, have potential to open the door to a compromise. But legislators and voters alike won't believe it until they see it.

Even House Republicans who voted in favor of the \$1.2 billion plan call it a farce.

"It was a meager attempt to access some federal money," says House Republican Leader Tom Cross. "But the fallacy in it is, you need to appropriate the whole amount of \$1.2 billion, and then you get reimbursed by the federal government." It is a small component of a bigger picture that has to be developed, he says. "But at the end of the day, it doesn't work."

Senate Republican Leader Frank Watson agreed but offered some hope that it could serve as a starting point.

"We'll see. I would like to believe that there was a sincere effort here, that it wasn't some cynical approach to this whole process of just, 'Pass a bill and don't worry about what happens.' We may get a chance to vote on it. At least it's accessing the federal dollars."

The mini version would use \$360 million in existing state dollars to access federal earmarks, allowing the state to spend the total of about \$1.2 billion.

Rep. Gary Hannig, a Litchfield Democrat sponsoring the measure, says some contractors can't even pour concrete until a series of preliminary steps are taken. The federal earmarks, set aside for such projects as a new Mississippi River bridge near St. Louis, would pay for such work as initial feasibility studies.

"It's a first step, I think, in an effort to try to access the federal money and a first step to try to get a capital bill passed in Illinois," Hannig says.

Sen. Donne Trotter, a Chicago Democrat and majority whip, agrees that it could be a first step to a capital bill. "It at least shows that there's some action versus no action being taken."

However, it's a baby step, far from meeting capital needs that fill hundreds of pages in previous capital bills.

The Illinois Department of Transportation, for instance, says the federal dollars earmarked for specific projects fund only a portion of the entire projects. "Without sufficient funding to advance projects from conception to construction, the earmarks will remain unutilized, even if matching funds are made available," Transportation Secretary Milton Sees wrote to representatives.

He added that the \$1.2 billion plan assumes that federal funds will be available for the next six years. The current federal transportation program is set to expire in a year. "There is absolutely no guarantee these federal earmarks will be available beyond that date," Sees wrote.

Hannig says the same fear applies to a full-scale capital plan. "I think we have to assume that our congressional delegation, which has done a good job in putting these earmarks together, will be able to keep them in place. We have to work off of that

So what will it take?

Trust between all parties.

But that first requires some attitude adjustments.

assumption, whether it's on the smaller capital bill that we passed or the bigger capital bill that the governor's proposed."

Meanwhile, the \$1.2 billion measure doesn't prevent legislators from negotiating a larger capital bill. Madigan's announcement of progress on discussions of leasing the Illinois Lottery could be the next step.

Soon after the speaker announced that progress, however, Senate President Emil Jones Jr. indicated his hesitancy: "I'll see when they pass something. We passed something twice on a bipartisan basis out of the Senate."

Republicans and Democrats in the Senate did, indeed, approve two versions of a capital plan, including a grandiose \$34 billion proposal negotiated by former U.S. House Speaker Dennis Hastert and Southern Illinois University President Glenn Poshard. It relied on a large expansion of gaming, which died in the House.

When the speaker announced that "gaming was dead" as a way to fund the construction program, the Senate erased the gaming portion and approved a smaller \$25 billion plan that relied on a lease of the lottery. It still stalled.

Madigan said that was because his caucus members distrust the governor. And until the administration proposes a capital plan with detailed legislation about which projects would be funded — line by line — the proposal will have a hard time getting votes from House Democrats.

Blagojevich's office insists that it provided detailed lists to caucus leaders. Poshard dismissed the House Democrats' complaints. Construction projects have never been listed line by line, he said, and that could limit the transportation department's ability to adjust if projects come in over or under budget.

Poshard also highlighted an "accountability provision" that would create a so-called lockbox for capital investments and lottery proceeds for education, which

currently receives about \$650 million from the state lottery operations.

But Madigan spokesman Steve Brown says neither the lockbox nor the governor's list of projects ensure that Blagojevich would *release* the money.

House Majority Leader Barbara Flynn Currie said in July that the spending side of any capital plan must be crystal clear. "Assuming we could reach agreement on the revenue side — a big assumption — we would definitely want line-item allocations and some way to guarantee that dollars allocated are actually spent."

Other funding ideas include transferring higher-than-expected revenues from two state taxes: the motor fuel tax that goes into a dedicated Road Fund and the sales tax on gasoline that goes into the general revenue fund. Currie said her caucus could consider using excess revenues from the Road Fund if the administration proves that the money would go directly to capital construction projects.

Transferring money from the general revenue fund is another story. She described it as "a very tough sell."

So what will it take? Trust between all parties. But that first requires some attitude adjustments. It also could change after Jones retires as Senate president in January, breaking the Blagojevich-Jones alliance and potentially opening the door to more communication with Madigan.

Whoever takes over in the Senate, the new leader will have to work with Blagojevich and Madigan to find a starting point, let alone a compromise.

To get there, all three should consider a poignant and objective analysis voiced last month during an opening prayer of the Illinois Senate's special session. The Rev. Michael Keppler, pastor at Springfield Southern Baptist Church, offered this insight:

"The majority seemingly proves each day its frustration with leadership and the inability to govern. The minority may be settling into the role of contentment with simply being the anti-majority. Both parties need to rise to actual leadership that results in adjusted priorities if the larger issues of fully funding human services, educational commitments, the capital program and the like are to be addressed." □

Bethany Jaeger can be reached at capitolbureau@aol.com.

BRIEFLY

HAPPY BIRTHDAY ABE

A nation prepares for Lincoln's bicentennial

Photograph courtesy of the Illinois Department of Historic Preservation



Abraham Lincoln and Mary Todd Lincoln interpreters help kick off a series of events leading up to Lincoln's 200th birthday February 12, 2009, as announced this summer outside of the Lincoln Home National Historic Site in Springfield.

Abraham Lincoln's 200th birthday spans beyond a single day and is engaging tourists worldwide. Three states, in particular, will celebrate February 12, 1809, from now through 2010.

Lincoln was born in Kentucky, raised in Indiana and became destined for the White House in Illinois.

The Illinois Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission, formed in 2006 in preparation for the celebration, is partnering with the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum in Springfield and local tourism agencies to plan a wide variety of activities throughout the remainder of this year and next.

The February 12 events range from a simultaneous reading of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address by Illinois students to a special naturalization ceremony for new U.S. citizens at the Old State Capitol in Springfield, where Lincoln delivered his "House Divided" speech.

Other events that span a few days or months include a special summer concert series at Ravinia Festival in Highland Park, a 360-mile bicycle tour of Lincoln sites in Illinois, Indiana and Kentucky and various events featuring authors from around the world who write about Lincoln.

The commission also will dole out nearly \$2 million in grants to Illinois communities that wish to coordinate their own events to honor Lincoln.

Ongoing events include the following:
The American Legacy Collection Foundation — Kay Smith, Illinois artist laureate; traveling art exhibition titled "Holding Hands With History."

Essays About Lincoln — A statewide reading and writing contest celebrating Lincoln's 200th birthday, sponsored by the Illinois State Archives, the Illinois State Board of Education and the Illinois State Library, partnering with Illinois Center for the Book.

Exploring Lincoln: His Life and Legacy — A yearlong public programming initiative in which Abraham Lincoln, his life and his legacy are explored through music, art, drama, books, film, storytelling and other activities. This initiative is a program of the Joliet Area Historical Museum.

Lincoln-Douglas Debate Sesquicentennial Events — From August to October of 1858, Lincoln and Stephen Douglas met in seven different cities in Illinois to participate in a series of formal political debates. Those communities will commemorate that important time in history with a series of events through October 2008.

Sister Cities Association of Springfield — Gettysburg Address speech and essay contest winners from Springfield's Sister City, Ashikaga, Tochigi, Japan, will make presentations at the Old State Capitol, November 19, 2008, 2009 and 2010.

University of Illinois at Springfield Lincoln Legacy High School Forum — Commemorating the life of Lincoln and his legacy through historical essays, written or creative works.

"Lawn of Lincoln" — Ravinia Festival in Highland Park will offer a free day of music and activities on September 7. The Illinois Symphony Orchestra and the Lincoln Trios of the Music Institute of Chicago will perform the world premieres of two of the Lincoln-inspired piano trio compositions that Ravinia has commissioned through a contest. Other performers include jazz singer Patricia Barber, piano prodigy Emily Bear and Sugar Strings.

"Voice of Lincoln" — The commission is partnering with the Illinois Broadcasters Association to sponsor a public service announcement campaign to promote the Bicentennial on Illinois radio stations. The Illinois Press Association and the commission also are

partnering to publish the Lincoln Log, a daily feature explaining a piece of Lincoln history and featured in more than 60 newspapers.

Events scheduled on the days surrounding Lincoln's 200th birthday:

February 10, 2009:

The Vachel Lindsay Home State Historic Site in Springfield will host a free public Lincoln reception.

February 11, 2009:

- A re-enactment of Lincoln's 1861 Farewell Address from Springfield will be staged at the city's Prairie Capital Convention Center.

- The Lincoln Home National Historic Site in Springfield will offer several living history, musical and scholarly programs from February 11 through 14.

- The Illinois Symphony Orchestra will offer a free public performance in Springfield.

February 12, 2009:

- New U.S. citizens will be sworn in during a special ceremony at the Old State Capitol in Springfield.

- A U.S. Postal stamp cancellation will also be held at the Old State Capitol.

- A period ball in the Lincoln Presidential Museum in Springfield will feature attendees in Civil War era formal regalia performing dances from the mid-1800s.

Good July weather helps crops after spring floods

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's August 12 crop report revealed that the outlook for the corn and soybean harvest in Illinois may not be nearly as dire as first thought following spring floods.

Based on actual field surveys for the first time this planting season, the USDA reported in August that corn was on pace to produce the second highest yield on record, behind 2004.

July's heat, humidity and gentle rains were weather conditions corn loved as it pollinated. Illinois corn has the potential to yield 172 bushels per acre, with a crop production of 2.03 billion bushels, which is 11 percent less than 2007.

"We're on track for a pretty good crop," says Darrel Good, professor in the Department of Agricultural and Consumer Economics at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. "What

Preserving history

Tourists hoping to visit Illinois historic sites should call ahead before planning a trip. Many sites, particularly in Springfield, have reduced hours to anywhere from one day a week to four days a week because of budget cuts.

Gov. Rod Blagojevich cut \$2.8 million from the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency's budget for this year, and \$2.5 million of that came from employees' salaries. About 80 seasonal workers lost their jobs in August.

The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum in Springfield, a popular destination for school field trips and various group tours, remains open seven days a week, as do the Springfield memorials for veterans.

The state operates some 60 facilities, but it's not yet known whether some could close, at least for the rest of the year, according to Dave Blanchette, spokesman for the Historic Preservation Agency.

In July, agency director Jan Grimes said: "We lost half of our funding, and so we're now studying what that means. It's too early to tell site by site, but it definitely will have an impact on every site in some way."

The last time hours of operation were reduced to five days a week was in 2002, when funding decreased under former Gov. George Ryan. Blagojevich later designated more money to hire part-time staff during the summer months, allowing the sites to stay open seven days a week.

While the sites often rely on volunteers to help reach out to communities and set up events, Grimes said the department cannot rely on volunteers to fill the union-backed positions of historians.

Jim Peters, president and chief executive officer of Landmarks Illinois, describes the budget cuts as starting a domino effect. "These aren't just budget cuts. It is the removal of history that impacts education, tourism revenue, the economic viability of the state and jobs. With high gas prices plaguing us, the State of Illinois should be encouraging short road trips to these historic sites, not shutting them down."

Bethany Jaeger

has everyone worried is that it is a late crop. That means we need good weather right through September, and we don't need any early killing freezes."

Based on conditions as of August 1, the USDA expects corn to yield 155 bushels per acre nationwide, up 3.9 bushels from last year. Likewise, the soybean harvest is predicted to be better than last year by 15 percent. However, the forecasted 2.97 billion bushels is still 7 percent under the record crop in 2006.

The report also included data from a special survey of Midwestern crop fields damaged during the June floods. Following the worst flooding in 15 years to hit Illinois, Iowa and Indiana, as many as 5 million acres of corn and soybeans, by some estimates, were lost or had to be replanted late.

A study released in mid-July by University of Illinois agricultural economists projected the average corn yields could be reduced by 2.9 bushels per acre

in Illinois, 3.5 bushels in Indiana and 6.3 bushels in Iowa because of later-than-normal planting and above-normal precipitation in May. The report projected soybean yields could be down 1.1 bushels, 0.4 bushels and 1.0 bushels per acre, respectively, in those same states.

"We're really right in the game with corn," says Good. "[The USDA] put Iowa at 171 bushels, so we're very competitive right at the highest end of major producing states. But, on soybeans, 42 bushels is pretty anemic."

Last year, Illinois farmers harvested an average of 175 bushels per acre of corn with a total production of 2.28 billion bushels and 43 bushels per acre of soybeans with a total production of 350 million bushels. Last year's national average for corn was 151 bushels per acre and 41.2 bushels for soybeans.

Beverly Scobell

State budget cuts result in layoffs

State constitutional officers stopped hiring new employees and started laying off others or asking them to take unpaid days off after budget cuts affected many of their funds for personnel.

Gov. Rod Blagojevich cut \$1.4 billion from the state's operating funds after the General Assembly sent him a spending plan that exceeded anticipated revenue for fiscal year 2009.

"It's tough," says Jen Hoelzle, spokeswoman for Lt. Gov. Pat Quinn. "Everything is affected. Travel, office supplies, everything. We're doing a lot of readjusting." They're even starting to look at online auction sites for a file cabinet.

Quinn's office received nearly 18 percent decreases across the board. The office may have to stop offering free tax counseling sites that help low-income residents. It will have a limited ability to reach out to communities and schools to help them with environmentally friendly projects, part of a new law adding to the office's responsibility to lead the Green Government Coordinating Council.

"We still have those responsibilities but no money to do it," Hoelzle says. "We will do more with less."

Last month, Treasurer Alexi Giannoulas' office laid off six of 190 employees and won't hire any new ones. All remaining employees also will have to take one or two unpaid days off, depending on their salaries, and pay levels for nonunion employees are

frozen. The office already made adjustments when Giannoulas took office and reduced the budget by \$100,000, says Sara Wojcicki, Giannoulas' spokeswoman.

She says the cuts came out of the blue and were relayed through press release.

"Somebody is losing their job over this. These cuts are very real," she says. "We just hope that moving forward that there is better communication if something like this were to have to happen again and that the General Assembly and the governor can work toward a better solution." The treasurer has called the cuts "vindictive" and political retribution for speaking against Blagojevich's budget proposals.

The governor's budget office denies the cuts have any political undertones and says Blagojevich acted responsibly to balance the budget. He blames the House for not approving measures to hike revenue.

Most of the reductions come from funds for personnel, which affects 88 percent of Attorney General Lisa Madigan's budget, says her spokeswoman, Robyn Ziegler. The office is losing \$13.8 million from the \$53.6 million approved by the General Assembly. To mitigate the need for layoffs, the office is asking employees to retire early or to reduce their hours to part-time with fewer benefits.

"These are totally, completely individual choices. It's not required," Ziegler says. But she adds: "Layoffs and furlough days will be unavoidable. We need to first see what kind of response we have to these first two options."

Nonunion employees also have to pay more toward their pensions now that the office has stopped paying a 1 percent contribution.

Between 2003 and 2007, the attorney general's office brought in more than \$4 billion through litigation of such cases as illegal dumping, consumer fraud and Medicaid fraud.

Secretary of State Jesse White's office also took a hit with an \$18 million cut for personnel. Henry Haupt, White's spokesman, says the office is exploring mandatory unpaid days off for all employees, unionized or not. But that could be a tall order. "In order for us to minimize the potential for layoffs, we would need all 3,800 employees to take furlough days."

The governor also zeroed out funding of \$3.25 million for a new program aimed at drunken driving offenders. But Haupt says the program will take effect January 1 as planned. It will apply to all first-time DUI offenders who need special driving privileges. They would have to pay about \$100 to install devices that require them to blow into a tube locked onto the ignition of the vehicle to measure blood alcohol levels.

"We will find a way to implement the program and make that work," Haupt says. "We're going to be resourceful."

In mid-August, Comptroller Dan Hynes was still considering ways to cope with the budget cuts, according to spokeswoman Carol Knowles. Most cuts involves personnel and money for postage, which affects paychecks.

Bethany Jaeger

Transportation jobs spark another lawsuit

Springfield-area legislators and local officials have sued Gov. Rod Blagojevich's administration in an attempt to block the state from moving about 150 jobs from the capital city to Harrisburg, about three hours south.

The legislators, all Republicans, join the City of Springfield, the local chamber of commerce and two public employee unions in the suit. Comptroller Dan Hynes and Treasurer Alexi Giannoulas also are named in the defense only because they oversee the expenditure of public funds.

The administration proposed moving the Illinois Department of Transportation's Division of Traffic Safety as a way to escape an expensive lease in Springfield and as a way to boost economic development in Harrisburg.

GOP legislators representing the Springfield area allege the governor's proposal was retribution for supporting a measure that would allow voters to recall elected officials, legislation perceived to be directed at the governor. The governor's office has denied that allegation.

As part of a state law regarding the closure of state facilities, the bipartisan legislative Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability held a six-hour public hearing in July. The panel voted unanimously to reject the plan. But the administration says it intends to move the facility, anyway.

"That's one thing that we have a problem with the governor, is he has no respect for this process," says Rep. Rich Brauer, a Petersburg Republican, a plaintiff in the lawsuit.

Other legal grounds for the lawsuit include purchasing real estate in a flood zone and using motor fuel taxes to buy office space and supplies. The intended Harrisburg facility also is not located in a business district, which the suit says could violate state law because no other facility in Harrisburg was considered to house the division. The transportation department already signed a contract to purchase the Harrisburg property for \$812,000, using money from the state's dedicated Road Fund. But the administration cannot buy it until after September 11.

Attorney Don Craven filed the complaint in Sangamon County Circuit Court on August 18. He says his clients don't trust the administration to honor the 50-day waiting period.

Bethany Jaeger

Lawmakers gain perspective on Turkey

A dozen legislators experienced two political extremes this summer. They traveled from Illinois, where leaders of the ruling Democratic Party can't agree on a course for state government, to Turkey, where the supreme court is considering a case to abolish the nation's entire ruling political party.

"Can you imagine? Abolishing the Democratic Party or the Republican Party?" says Rep. Elaine Nekritz, a Northbrook Democrat on the trip. "And yet they have a very calm attitude about that. For them, change is a way of life."

The Republic of Turkey is at a crossroads where East meets West. It bridges the Black and Mediterranean seas, with borders along Greece and Bulgaria to the east. Its western and southern borders include Iraq, Iran and Syria. Its citizens are used to conflict. Once home to the Muslim Ottoman Empire, the country still endures a civil war between the Turks and the Kurds, who are seeking independence and launch frequent attacks at the Iraqi border.

Like America, Turkey has a strong interest in stabilizing Iraq; yet, Turkey is not well known in this country or other parts of the world, says Suleyman Turhan, executive director of the Niagara Foundation, which is based in Chicago. The organization has sent about 300 U.S. residents to Turkey each of the past four years to raise awareness and build business relationships.

The foundation, founded by Turkish entrepreneurs and scholars at Chicago area universities, paid for the legislators' travel within Turkey. Legislators paid for their airfare. They visited local media outlets, members of Parliament, business owners and university officials.

Sen. Pamela Althoff, a McHenry Republican, says the cultural exchange opened her eyes to how other countries view the role of the United States when it withdraws troops from Iraq.

"Many of the individuals feel that we have to be careful about how we leave that country, that if we don't leave it with somewhat of a stable environment that there will be major consequences to the area," she says. "And they just wish to ensure that we're aware of that and how it plays out."



Illinois legislators visit Parliament in Ankara, the capital of Turkey.



Illinois legislators pose in Istanbul, overlooking the Bosphorus Strait between Asia and Europe.

Sen. Bill Brady, a Bloomington Republican, says the trip piqued his interest in trading opportunities.

"People in the textile [industry] and the ceramic industry would like to open doors in Illinois and would like to know where Illinois could open doors there. Agriculture, particularly, may [offer] some opportunities for Illinois businesses to get involved in energy, from coal to nuclear and so forth."

Turkish residents were paying about \$14 a gallon for gasoline at the time of their trip.

Nekritz says she repeatedly was asked whether the trip has changed her impression of Turkey. "I said, 'No, it's formed my impression of Turkey because



State Sen. Bill Brady, a Bloomington Republican, and his wife, Nancy Brady, visit the Hagia Sophia Museum in Istanbul.

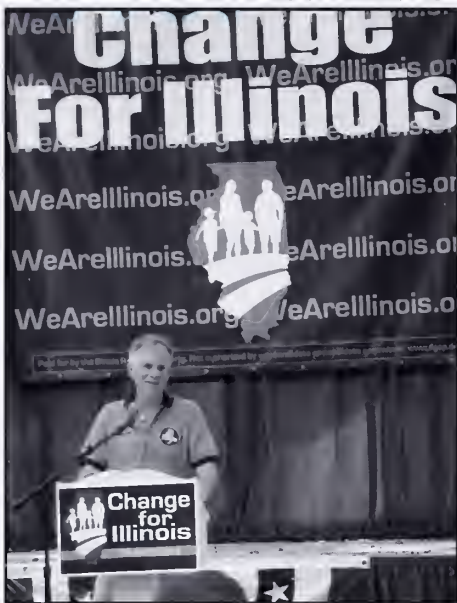
I never thought about Turkey until you guys invited me here.' It just was really not on my radar screen."

It is now.

Bethany Jaeger

POLITICAL RALLIES AT THE STATE FAIR

Photographs by Bethany Jaeger



State Republican Party Chairman Andy McKenna speaks at the podium during the GOP rally day. The theme of change represents the party's slogan to reform government with renewed trust and fiscal responsibility.



The theme of Governor's Day was securing jobs through a capital construction program. Numerous supporters of Gov. Rod Blagojevich were bused in to line the stage during the Democrats' rally.

The Illinois State Fair kicked off the political campaign season, with Democrats and Republicans rallying on the fairgrounds in mid-August. While Democrats united behind U.S. Sen. Barack Obama for president, they couldn't hide divisions within the state political party. The GOP united behind a message of change but focused on gearing up for the 2010 elections.



House Speaker Michael Madigan announces "very, very good progress" on a potential plan to lease the Illinois Lottery as a way to finance a construction program. It could open the door to a potential compromise with Gov. Rod Blagojevich.



The GOP rally day attracted many who wore red, white and blue. The Republicans also started the day with a prayer and the national anthem.



House Minority Leader Tom Cross holds up six fingers to count the number of years Democrats have held complete control over the legislature and all constitutional offices, but he says they have nothing to show for those years.



Republicans had a much tamer rally day at the State Fair compared to Democrats, but they did not bus in supporters as the Democrats did.



Rochester junior Aaron Mulvey followed the governor with a camera as they entered the fairgrounds. He video recorded the governor as he asked why his school in central Illinois still hadn't received a \$10 million construction grant promised to the district in 2006. He posted the video on the YouTube Web site.



Senate Minority Leader Frank Watson joins a Republican rally on the steps of the Statehouse to announce an Agenda for Action, including creating jobs through a capital construction program, delivering tax relief, enacting ethics reforms and approving a constitutional amendment to let voters recall elected officials.



New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson, a former Democratic contender for president, was the guest speaker at Governor's Day. He attracted a crowd, but Democrats still lacked attendance from House Speaker Michael Madigan, chair of the Illinois Democratic Party, and four constitutional officers, all Democrats.



Union members of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Council 31 interrupted Gov. Rod Blagojevich's speech by chanting against reduced or more expensive state health care benefits.

Budget cuts put study on hold

Budget cuts sliced funding for the next phase of a three-part report anticipating and preparing for the state's water needs by midcentury. In July, the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning released the first-phase report projecting water usage for 11 northeastern Illinois counties in 2050. In a worst-case scenario, the area would use 2.4 billion gallons of water a day, an increase of 64 percent from current levels. That, the report concludes, could trigger shortages for the region.

"Our money is part of what has been line-item vetoed," says Randy Blankenhorn, executive director of CMAP.

Sen. Susan Garrett, a Lake Forest Democrat, says she has been working with environmental and water groups for the past four years to get this legislation approved and is "very disappointed" it was pulled from the budget.

"The funding was promised to them," says Garrett. "It's a phased program. It's a very important program for the entire state of Illinois."

In an executive order in 2006, Gov. Rod Blagojevich asked for a study of the state's water resources. CMAP is conducting the \$1.14 million study, which is funded through the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. Research for the first phase was conducted by Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

The money that was cut from the FY 2009 budget would fund the second phase of the plan, a detailed accounting of the state's water supply conducted by the Illinois State Water Survey. CMAP then would match the water demand scenarios of the first phase with data on actual and projected water supply, reporting the conclusions in the third phase of the project.

As of mid-August, a capital spending plan had not been approved. "At some point in time, these dollars are going to be restored," says Garrett, "at least in order for me to sign off on a capital bill. The governor made a commitment. We need to follow through."

Beverley Scobell

Canadian rail company is at a crossroad

A proposal to ease rail traffic congestion in the Chicago area has many suburbs up in arms. Legal battles could result.

Canadian National Railway Company, based in Ontario, plans to buy a major portion of the Elgin, Joliet & Eastern Railway Co. for \$300 million, offering an additional \$140 million for rail upgrades and other local concerns.

The Illinois congressional delegation is split in its reaction to the purchase. U.S. Reps. Melissa Bean, a Barrington Democrat, and Peter Roskam, a Wheaton Republican, proposed legislation that could halt the purchase.

The company said in August it would sue if the deal weren't sealed by the end of the year, but its proposal is subject to a federal review process by the Surface Transportation Board in Washington, D.C.

The independent board issued a report analyzing various effects, including increased freight traffic that would disrupt travel patterns and Metra commuter rail lines. That includes the proposed Suburban Transit Access Route, or STAR line, also designed to relieve congestion. Canadian National and Metra would have to "work together closely" to ensure efficiency, according to the report.

Jim Kvedaras, senior manager of U.S. public and government affairs for Canadian National, says this is nothing new. "We have to coordinate with Metra's operations on two of our lines already. ... It requires working further with Metra so that the commuter line would not be waiting for clearance from the freight line."

Kvedaras says the proposal is an effort to use private money to improve infrastructure, leading to lower costs to consumers. "We don't exist except for the customers that need us to provide their services."

Canadian National projects that 65 communities could benefit from the transaction, compared with about 30 that would see increased rail traffic.

The city of Joliet is the first to announce it has a potential agreement with Canadian National. Tom Thanas, city manager, says Canadian National will pay for quiet zones around all EJ&E crossings within the city

limits, as well as computer programs for emergency dispatch services to reroute responders if train traffic gets in the way.

One deal so far is unique to Joliet. Canadian National would divert some traffic to existing EJ&E lines that are elevated above busy roads.

"It's not to say that the neighboring communities are doing the wrong thing," Thanas says. "The situation of neighboring communities is much different than what it is in Joliet, primarily because we have an excellent elevated railroad track system that's been in existence for decades."

Many other municipalities want Canadian National to pay at least 5 percent of the cost of building new elevated crossings.

The village of Plainfield adjacent to Interstate 55 has 17 street-level crossings at major thoroughfares, says village President James Waldorf. The village wants at least three above-grade crossings over the DuPage River, which cuts through town.

"There's no animosity. We don't curse or swear at the fact that they want to transport goods because it's more economical for us," Waldorf says. "But in the meantime, we need to have safe passage, and we absolutely need to have enough of them to accommodate not just what's here today, but the 125,000 population that we're anticipating for build-out."

But, he adds, "there is potential to agree, absolutely, positively."

The city of Naperville isn't as optimistic.

"At this point, we haven't had any conversations that lead us to believe that we're close to a resolution, but we're taking it step by step," says Karyn Robeles, Naperville's transportation team leader.

Negotiators want more than the 5 percent offer to pay for the \$55 million estimated cost to build an elevated crossing at Ogden Avenue.

"We don't feel the taxpayers should have to bear the brunt of those costs because of the project they're pursuing," Robeles says.

Numerous public hearings are scheduled throughout this month, and the Surface Transportation Board could issue a final report this winter.

Bethany Jaeger

BOOKSHELF

Adlai Stevenson: Time to learn from a master

The politics of Adlai Stevenson II may no longer be possible, writes his son, former Illinois U.S. Sen. Adlai Stevenson III, in a compilation of essays, *Adlai Stevenson's Lasting Legacy* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), edited by Alvin Liebling. "The presidential selection process has become a multiyear physical and financial endurance contest."

Adlai III is one of several politicians, friends and compatriots who watched, or shared in, his father's career as a statesman and reflect on how rare a politician he was and how much the country needs to see his like again. "The Guv's schooling was in the world and on the ground. His politics was empirical and rational. He revered our democracy. ... What won was more important than who won. Patriotism was not worn on the lapel. It was the tranquil, steady dedication of a lifetime."

When Adlai Stevenson II decided to

enter public service, he started at the top of Illinois politics, running for and winning the governorship as a political unknown in 1948. "In Springfield, demonstrating that executive experience is not necessarily a requisite for the governorship, he was fairly successful with his ambitious legislative program ... preferring to spend more on schools and the unfortunate," Robert P. Howard said in his assessment of the 31st governor in *The Illinois Governors: Mostly Good and Competent*. "When his term was over, his presidential supporters could claim that he had improved the moral climate of state government."

He ran for president twice, then served as ambassador to the United Nations, working for nonproliferation of nuclear weapons and keeping peace during the Cuban missile crisis.

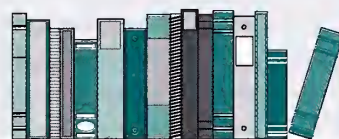
Liebling, who is a senior U.S. administrative law judge in Chicago, writes in the introduction that Stevenson's legacy from his work at the U.N. was a "matter of consistently seeking a necessary multi-lateral consensus and effectively carrying

it out" and "with that, providing America, in a position of strength, the opportunity to foster freedom among others by our example and assistance, not an impatient arrogance productive of resentment and resistance."

A common theme among the contributors is a strong desire to recapture Stevenson's worldview. "I long for a president who sees that partnerships operate through consultation and persuasion," says Adele Simmons, vice chair of Chicago Metropolis and Stevenson's godchild, in her essay.

But Stevenson himself summed up his philosophy the best: "There is no room for the 'Big Stick' or the ultimatum, be it the small or the medium size or even the large economy size. Ours must be the role of the good neighbor. The good partner, the good friend. Never, the big bully."

Beverly Scobell



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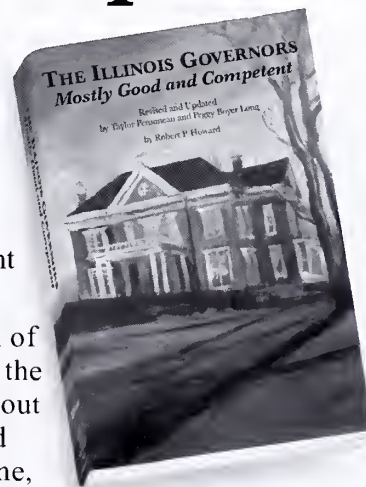
They could be scoundrels:

- One just went to prison
- Two served time
- Three beat the rap

But they could be visionary leaders:

- One freed his slaves
- One helped the new state get free of debt
- One changed the face of modern state government

The Illinois Governors: Mostly Good and Competent introduces you to all of the state's chief executives, from Shadrach Bond to Rod Blagojevich. It builds on the work of **Robert Howard**, the late newspaperman and historian who first wrote about the governors in 1988. **Taylor Pensoneau**, a biographer of Illinois politicians, and **Peggy Boyer Long**, the recently retired executive editor of *Illinois Issues* magazine, have updated the book to include the newest administrations.



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On deck

Who'll step up to the plate as the state's next political leaders?

by Kristen McQueary

As Rod Blagojevich proved, political farm teams — where future leaders grow while they await their shot at the big leagues — can comprise little-known rookies who soar to prominence quickly and unexpectedly. In 2002 when he ran for governor, then-U.S. Rep. Blagojevich was familiar to residents of the 5th Congressional District on Chicago's northwest side. But few outside his district knew him or had even heard of him.

Back then, Blagojevich may not have been included on a list of up-and-coming political leaders. Yet there he stood, the Democratic nominee for governor, who went on to beat Attorney General Jim Ryan in the general election. Four years later, Blagojevich won the governor's race again. He demonstrated that taking inventory of rising political leaders is an exercise in variables. Today's luminary might be tomorrow's disappointment. Tomorrow's superstar might be today's unknown.

For Illinois Republicans, the roll call of future leaders is thin. Republicans have not recovered from the federal corruption trial of former Gov. George Ryan and the subsequent collapse of a party built around him. Ten years ago, Republicans commanded four statewide offices, including the governor's mansion. They held a majority in the state Senate. And they unexpectedly tossed an incumbent Democrat, Carol Moseley Braun, from her U.S. Senate perch, replacing her with Republican

Peter Fitzgerald. Instead of growing young, vibrant leaders, Republicans allowed a shadow government of power-brokers, such as businessmen William Cellini of Springfield and Robert Kjellander, Illinois' GOP committeeman representing the Republican National Committee, to sink their roots instead.

As a result, the party's only bragging rights have been a few upset victories in the General Assembly. Republicans lost every statewide post to the Democrats, ceded control of the state Senate and lost an open U.S. Senate race in 2004 to Barack Obama when Fitzgerald opted for retirement. That same year, Democratic U.S. Rep. Melissa Bean ousted 33-year GOP incumbent Phil Crane. This year, Bill Foster, a Democratic newcomer, seized the near-sacred GOP borough of former U.S. House Speaker Dennis Hastert.

"We are rebuilding," says state Rep. Tom Cross of Oswego, who leads Republicans in the Illinois House. "We've had our struggles, but we're on the rebound, and I think there is a lot of enthusiasm among grassroots Republicans. They don't like being down, and so they're committed to working very hard to change that."

Rebuilding strength and confidence in the Republican Party will require the due diligence of a strong bench. To whom will the party turn?

Meanwhile, the Democrats' stable of up-and-comers remains strong — if only the old guard would get out of the way.

Potential detriment to Democratic candidates comes from a proclivity for self-destruction among the party's standard-bearers: a beyond-repair personal feud between Blagojevich and House Speaker Michael Madigan; a state budget grounded by inertia; and the potential for Republican candidates to capitalize on it. A new leader may emerge when Senate Democrats choose a replacement for President Emil Jones Jr., who announced his upcoming retirement last month, but so far Democrats have proved one-party rule doesn't work well.



House Minority Leader Tom Cross



U.S. Rep. Peter Roskam

For Republicans, U.S. Reps. Peter Roskam of Wheaton and Mark Kirk of Highland Park carry increasing influence within the party hierarchy. The retirements of Hastert and U.S. Reps. Jerry Weller of Morris and Ray LaHood of Peoria set off alarm bells within the GOP congressional delegation. The Democrats hope to pick up at least one of those seats; they are wagering on Debbie Halvorson of Crete, the Illinois Senate's majority leader, who is running in Weller's district.

Neither Roskam nor Kirk, however, can devote significant time to statewide party-building. They are optimistic about being re-elected in November but are tethered to their own campaigns for now. Roskam faces Jill Morgenthaler, who served two years as Illinois' Homeland Security adviser. Kirk is running against Dan Seals, a consultant who came close to knocking Kirk out in 2006.

To re-establish itself, the Illinois Republican Party needs to be visionary, Roskam says.

"We need to be casting a vision that is more than, 'We're not the Democrats,'" he says. "Sen. Obama has been very silent about his Illinois connections and all the things that are going on that are unpleasant, and there's a reason for that. It's because a lot of Illinois voters are really fed up with the nonsense they see coming out of Cook County and Springfield. In order to regain people's confidence, you don't whine your way back into the majority."

Kirk often is mentioned as potential gubernatorial material, although for now, he remains focused on Washington, D.C. His resume as a Naval Reserve intelligence officer who served combat missions in Iraq, Haiti and Bosnia have shaped him into a go-to spokesman on national defense and foreign policy. He co-chairs the Tuesday Group, a caucus of moderate Republicans that recently established a fundraising arm.

"As of this moment, I don't see anyone who can raise the kind of money and have the backing to compete for governor, except for maybe Kirk," says Paul Green, professor of policy studies at Roosevelt University in Chicago.

"I just don't see anyone else. The party has no one. I recently looked at the list of GOP delegates to the national convention, and I don't know most of them — and I've been around a long time."

Green's advice for the GOP? Recruit someone like Paul Vallas who ran for governor on the Democratic ticket in 2002. Vallas would struggle in a crowded Democratic primary but might consider crossing the aisle to run again. Vallas is overseeing the New Orleans school district. He maintained an Illinois residence, however, and has not ruled out a future in politics.

Republicans in Illinois also are looking to Aaron Schock, a 26-year-old whiz kid from Peoria who was elected to the General Assembly in 2004 while serving simultaneously as president of the Peoria School Board. After just three years in the Illinois House, he is asking voters for a promotion. Schock is the GOP nominee for LaHood's 18th Congressional District seat, facing Democrat Colleen Callahan. Charismatic and focused, he established his first retirement savings account at the age of 14 and bought real estate when he was only 18 years old.

"There are no limits for him," Cross says. "He's a hard worker. He's politically savvy and astute. He's a fairly conservative guy, but he doesn't grate



U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk



State Rep. Aaron Schock

on those who aren't. Our party has been lacking in effective, strong young people — a farm team — but he represents what that's all about."

While Cross has been approached several times to run statewide or for Congress, he says he enjoys his current role as Republican House leader too much to give it up. Redistricting in 2010 could give Republicans the chance to pick up seats from the Democrats, who hold a 67-51 seat advantage in the House. If the stars align for Republicans, Cross is positioned for House speaker-in-waiting. He's willing to hang on.

"Do I think about other things? Sure," he says. "But redistricting is right around the corner, and there is a complete meltdown by the Democrats in Springfield right now. It sounds presumptuous to say, 'I'd like to be speaker,' but I do think there is potential for Republicans to have the House. It's not going to happen this election — it would probably take a couple elections — but it's something I would certainly be working toward."

Meanwhile, the Democrats boast a thick roster of up-and-comers, headlined by Obama and including U.S. Reps. Rahm Emanuel and Jesse Jackson Jr., Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan, Treasurer Alexi Giannoulias and a

freshman Chicago alderman, Brendan Reilly, who scrapped with Chicago Mayor Richard Daley over Daley's decision to relocate a children's museum. Also on the list: Comptroller Dan Hynes, U.S. Rep. Melissa Bean, state Veterans' Affairs Director Tammy Duckworth and a handful of state lawmakers jostling for slots on the statewide ticket.

"It's almost an embarrassment of riches for the Democrats," says Chris Mooney, professor of political science with the Institute of Government and Public Affairs at the University of Illinois at Springfield. "It's a question of how do they sort themselves out?"

Madigan is mum on her plans for 2010, saying only that she is focused on Obama's presidential campaign for now. But the table is being set for higher office. Her political operation, Citizens for Lisa Madigan, raised \$854,000 in cash and in-kind contributions during the last six months of 2007. She hired a political director, Novia Pagone. And she is tackling a broad assortment of issues as attorney general that would parlay nicely into an executive bid: She pursued the makers of dangerous children's toys; went after international lending giants accused of preying on home buyers; and cracked down on methamphetamine suppliers.

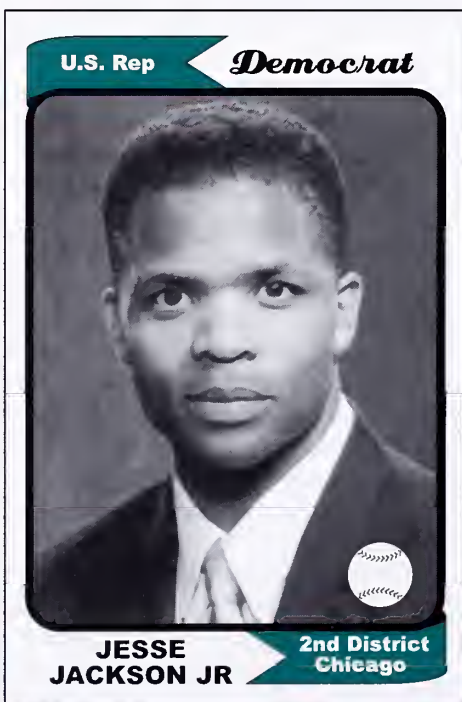
She also spoiled the fast-tracked relocation of a casino for suburban Rosemont. She joined in the nationwide prosecution of several pharmaceutical giants, and she argued a case before the U.S. Supreme Court.

To round out her resume, Madigan can showcase Exhibit A: a nifty letter from Chicago-based U.S. Attorney Patrick Fitzgerald, thanking her for sidelining her office's investigation into the hiring practices of the Blagojevich administration. Fitzgerald requested she step aside so that federal authorities could take the lead. Madigan agreed and then released a glowing letter from Fitzgerald, complimenting her teamwork. That 2006 exchange, best known for Fitzgerald's reference to "endemic hiring fraud" within state government, would neutralize questions about Madigan's integrity and independence from the Democratic political machine, should she run for governor. Praise, in writing, from the state's top corruption fighter is pure gold for someone in her position.

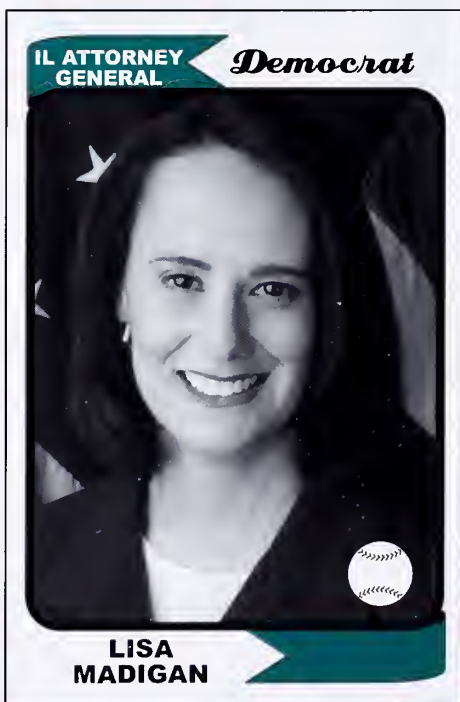
"I'm having a hard time thinking of someone better. She's just got the package," Mooney says. "Women are hot property all over the country. They're being elected as governors, senators. Imagine the ticket in 2010 if she runs.



U.S. Rep. Rahm Emanuel



U.S. Rep. Jesse Jackson Jr.



Attorney General Lisa Madigan



Treasurer Alexi Giannoulias



Alderman Brendan Reilly



Comptroller Dan Hynes

It'll be a few guys in suits — and her."

Treasurer Giannoulias is less likely to run for governor if Lisa Madigan decides to get in the race, but barring any missteps, he is prepping for higher office as well. After all, he already thumped one of the most ruthless, practiced politicians in Illinois: Speaker Madigan, who also is state Democratic Party chairman, as well as Lisa Madigan's father.

Giannoulias faced a Madigan-backed treasurer candidate in the 2006 primary, Paul Mangieri. Giannoulias beat him, despite hardball from the speaker, who was on a mission to sink Giannoulias' candidacy. Speaker Madigan pressured numerous Giannoulias backers to withdraw their support; some elected officials begged to have their names removed from an endorsement list on Giannoulias' Web site, fearing retaliation from the speaker.

Together, Giannoulias, Madigan and Hynes are positioned for promotion. So is U.S. Rep. Jesse Jackson Jr., a Chicago Democrat who has spent more than a decade in Congress. He interjects just enough in state and local politics to keep a strong presence. He has clashed with Daley and Blagojevich over corruption and airport issues. Recently, Jackson Jr. lambasted his own father, the Rev. Jesse

Jackson, for derogatory remarks he made about Obama.

Jackson's tendency to be a loner, however, also hurts his ability to build cohesion around his candidacy. He rankled members of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee by roundly criticizing Halvorson over an airport bill this summer. Halvorson is competing for the 11th Congressional District seat, right next door to Jackson's 2nd District. She didn't need the bad press, Democratic officials complained.

Electing Halvorson to Congress is among the many duties of U.S. Rep. Rahm Emanuel, chairman of the House Democratic Caucus, who is credited with turning the House back to Democratic control and propelling Nancy Pelosi to the speaker's podium in 2006. Emanuel helps guide the Democratic House agenda while raising money for candidates such as Halvorson. He isn't interested in returning to state politics — a popular political blog recently speculated he wants to be U.S. House speaker — but his clout in the nation's capital qualifies him as a star player for Illinois Democrats.

Both parties are taking early steps to line up their statewide tickets for 2010. Summer golf outings are in full swing. Conversations are under way. Two

Senate Republicans, Bill Brady of Bloomington and Christine Radogno of Lemont, expressed interest in running for governor, along with Ron Gidwitz, a businessman and former state schools official who ran in 2006. State Rep. Dan Rutherford, U.S. Rep. John Shimkus and Senate Republican Leader Frank Watson help moor the party, as well.

But could any of them beat the yet-to-be-determined Democratic statewide ticket? And what if Blagojevich runs again?

"I wouldn't count him out," professor Green says. "The politics of Illinois are less of a disaster than the government of Illinois, so whoever wins is going to face the biggest problems this state has faced since 1932."

Maybe that person isn't even on the list yet. Politics is a game of unknowns, after all.

"Someone could emerge two years from now and we go, 'Wow. This is really a quality person.' Things have a way of working themselves out," says Cross. "Look at Rod. Look at Aaron Schock. There is opportunity out there for that person, whoever it may be." □

Kristen McQueary is a political writer for the SouthtownStar newspaper, which covers the south and southwest suburbs of Chicago.

The spectrum

Children diagnosed with autism have unique needs that challenge parents and schools trying to help them become productive adults

by Bethany Jaeger

An autism diagnosis sends parents on an anxious search for ways to save their children from closed, mysterious worlds.

They jump at the chance to learn more about scientific breakthroughs, hoping that some day, science will find a way to “fix” their children.

Harvard University scientists propelled those hopes in July with an article published in the journal *Science*. The study suggests that activating some defective genes in the brain could emulate flipping a light switch and, say, enable communication skills.

The discovery also could reinforce what parents and educators already are doing. Increasingly, they are using repetition and behavioral analysis programs to help children learn such skills as controlling impulses, conversing with classmates or assembling retail displays.

The caveat is that scientists say the genetic defects are unique to each child — a familiar but exhaustive reality for parents who explore highly individual and expensive therapies for their children to apply at home and at school.

Children with autism land on a spectrum, the medical title used to indicate mild to severe symptoms of various devel-

opmental disorders. The symptoms range from being unable to use language to communicate to being so high functioning that it's hard to tell a student has special needs.

Seven-year-old Noah Davis is very high functioning, even participating in gifted programs in Springfield Public School District 186. He has Asperger Syndrome,

could help Jacob develop his social and motor skills.

And then there's Ross Brotherton, a 23-year-old who uses his own form of language to communicate. Because he had one of the first autism diagnoses in Taylorville, his parents went from being told they had to put him in an institution to helping teachers create classrooms around

his needs each year. Ross now works in the community.

There's no formula that works for every child on the spectrum. The needs are unique and can be as specific as allowing Jacob Jankauski to jump on a mini trampoline to release energy before returning to class.

But every school district's policies and responses to special needs also differ. Parents become researchers and advocates, trying to work with school officials to use methods that they believe work best for their

children. And they have to do it over and over again every time their children get new teachers, enter new schools or develop new behaviors as they mature into adults.

A growing network of services is connecting parents and experts in regions throughout the state, but limited funds challenge full statewide expansions. At local levels, particularly in downstate Illinois, the ability and willingness to



Photograph by Bethany Jaeger

Melissa Council, a therapist, explains to Jacob Jankauski of Athens how to do a crafts project during a summer camp for children with autism.

named after Dr. Hans Asperger and described as a milder form of autism. He remains in general education classrooms, but his parents are seeking a personal aide to help him focus and to free up the classroom teacher.

The parents of Jacob Jankauski, a 12-year-old in Athens, formed their own support team and recruited family friends to obtain training as therapists so they

adjust to each new challenge throughout an autistic child's development also varies as widely as awareness levels everywhere.

Awareness is increasing, but not fast enough. Before 2004, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says autism was believed to occur in up to 5 children per 10,000. Since 2004, the CDC calculates that up to 6 per 1,000 children, or 1 in 166, live with an autism spectrum disorder.

The earlier children are diagnosed, the sooner they can start "interventions" to help them develop physical, social and verbal skills. Yet, much about the disorder is still unknown.

Researchers note that the increasing number of diagnoses reflects a higher level of awareness, but school districts struggle to keep pace.

The Illinois State Board of Education estimates that about 12,000 children diagnosed with autism attended public schools in this state last year, an increase of about 1,000 from a year ago, according to Barbara Sims, principal consultant for the state board. But that doesn't count the children who participate in special education programs but don't yet have an autism diagnosis.

More often, teachers are required to attend sessions for some kind of special education training, particularly as more autism students integrate into mainstream classrooms.

"Whereas it used to be special ed teachers didn't see any children with autism, now every single special ed teacher is going to be working with at least one child with autism," said Lyn Becker, a special education teacher in Rochester and education advocate in central Illinois. "And statistics show that every regular ed teacher will have a minimum of one child on the spectrum in their classroom. We just have to catch up with that and get these people trained."

She says in her 20 years of experience, she knows schools aren't as responsive as they could be. That's improving, however, she says, and success depends on how parents present information. It also depends on the support systems schools already have in place.

When parents believe a school district can't satisfy a child's needs, they often seek help from special education lawyers such as Charles Fox. In state and federal

court cases, the Northbrook attorney has concentrated his efforts on special education since 1994. He also is an adjunct instructor at DePaul Law School's Special Education Advocacy Clinic, which opened this year in Chicago. And he is the father of a son with special needs.

Fox says his clients tend to focus on increasing the one-on-one attention their children get in education programs, especially in the early years after an autism diagnosis. While he says the consensus in autism literature is that children need about 25 hours of one-on-one attention a week to make a real difference, the typical classroom program "doesn't come anywhere close to 25 hours." He says so-called early education programs often meet for about half of that time, only some of which is dedicated to one-on-one lessons and evaluations.

When a child with autism enters his or her middle years, Fox says, the family's focus typically shifts from emphasizing academic skills to life skills, such as taking a shower, cooking a meal or riding a bus.

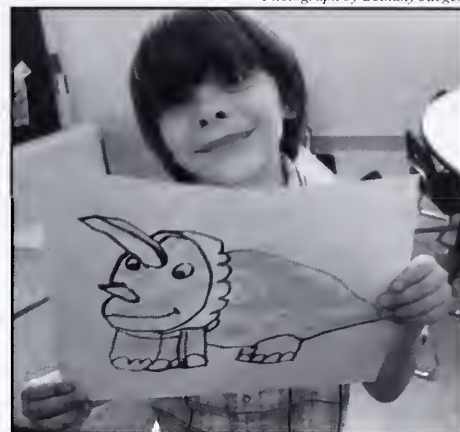
As children transition into their adult years, he says, parents should help them look for employment, especially jobs that channel their interests and energy to something they like. Self-employment also can allow people with autism to determine their own hours or to work from home.

The Illinois State Board of Education intends for public school districts to teach all children in the least restrictive environments as possible. Most children with any type of disability have individual education plans that address their strengths and weaknesses. Those plans also define classroom modifications for each student.

Students such as Noah Davis in Springfield are considered high-functioning and don't always have those individual education plans. He remains in the general education classrooms with some protections under federal law regarding discrimination based on disabilities.

His parents, Mike and Jennie Davis of Springfield, continuously combat the assumption that their son is so high functioning that he doesn't need special services. "He still has a lot of issues that people just don't see," his mother says.

He has obsessions of sorts, such as needing to be first in line, avoiding certain smells and requiring that all of his animal toys and drawings have four legs — all of



Noah Davis of Springfield loves to draw animals, but they must have four legs. And all four legs must simultaneously be touching the ground. He has Asperger Syndrome, a milder disorder on the autism spectrum.

which must be flat to the ground — and straight tails. Anything out of order can trigger a tantrum. Yet, he's extremely verbal and almost overly social. His characteristics sometimes demand a lot of attention from the classroom teachers.

So Jennie Davis is seeking a personal assistant for her son, but she says he can't receive a personal aide without the individual education plan that calls for an assistant. There's also a question about whether he will be included in gifted programming, as she hopes.

While there is no specific path to determine what's best for each student, the district tries to work with parents, says Leuwania Baker, managing principal of student support who oversees special education services for District 186.

"We know that [parents] are also the children's first teachers," she says. "Do we listen? Certainly we listen. They're part of that team, and that team is putting together the individual educational plan."

The teams rely on research to find new ways to adjust and accommodate.

"We continue to learn new things all the time, and that's still happening, especially in the area of autism," Baker says. "[The autism] label is so broad. There are just so many different pieces that may or may not apply to individual students."

Other students who have individual education plans can benefit from flexibility in the classroom.

Jacob Jankauski has a mild form of autism. He eagerly tells others, "I'll be a teenager next year," and he often repeats phrases that he practiced during therapy sessions.

"I did a good job," he says, and, "I'll work some reading and language at junior high next year. And my mom will drive me to school next year. And my mom will drop me off next year."

He used to not speak at all.

That started to change when his parents, Ed and Karen Jankauski, built an entire support network of trained therapists. Jacob now speaks so much that they recently joked about having to bite their tongues not to ask him to be quiet during a long car ride. He also looks in people's eyes when he talks to them.

While his father says therapy completely changed Jacob's life, they had to dip into his college savings to pay for it. They also hired an education advocate, costing up to \$75 an hour, to ensure Jacob's classroom activities complement the work he does at home.

Becker, who trained Jacob's three therapists, says school officials are more likely to listen and to implement families' proposals when they can provide documentation to show that what they're doing at home actually works.

The problem, however, is that schools often lack funding and resources to get the type of training that teachers need, inhibiting consistency, she says.

"I think there's a real attempt to have some type of continuity, but I will say it's probably a downfall. And that's a communication problem. It takes time and effort and energy for different teams to get together and communicate, and that time is just not available. It's crucial to the development of these children, but it's very hard to do."

State officials recognize that some school districts are more malleable than others.

"There are discrepancies with regards to the services that are available across the state," says Elizabeth Hanselman, assistant superintendent for special education and support services for the State Board of Education. "To say as a state that we've regulated X, Y and Z for every program, there's a lot of local control."

Hanselman says Illinois is one of six states receiving a five-year federal grant to establish regional teams designed to improve continuity. They provide training, technical assistance and coaching to educators across the state.

During the past decade, Illinois also has participated in a national alliance called the Autism Training and Technical Assistance Project. Ten years ago, the state received about \$60,000 in federal funds for the project. The grant amount jumped to \$724,000 this fiscal year.

But federal funding still can't meet the demand. Sims says that although the program trained 472 teams between 1998 and 2004, that doesn't come close to helping all of the nearly 4,000 public schools across the state.

"To be honest, we couldn't even keep up with the growth and identification."

Training alone also doesn't solve the problem. The minute teachers return from training sessions and a child has an unexplainable meltdown in the classroom, the teachers often revert to a past practice, even if it's the wrong approach, Sims says.

"Research shows us that you can train

people for as long as you want to. You can't change what they do with kids unless you provide ongoing support and coaching for them."

So in 2005, the state took a new approach and entered into a partnership with Illinois State University in Normal to offer free online training for anyone, as well as a graduate level course for people working on their master's degrees in special education. Various districts throughout the state offer follow-up courses, and staff from the Illinois Autism Training and Technical Assistance Project work monthly with each local team.

"So as they get farther and farther away from this training and they hit situations they're not sure how to deal with, we have our coaches available to work with them to help work out solutions," Sims says.

Even more intensive support is available from the Illinois Autism Training and Technical Assistance Project's Focus Family Support program, but limited staffing prevents it from serving more than 40 to 45 families a year, according to Sims. About 120 families are on a waiting list.

Families meet with experts and talk about everything, including the way having a child with autism affects their marriages. Then the families select a support team, usually involving neighbors, other family members, community providers and school officials. They all endure intense training that can last as long as a year, finishing when they produce a plan for how to support the child in school, in the community and at home.

"We have found that the success rate is way higher when the family is making the calls," Sims says.

This time, state funding can't keep up with the demand. The State Board of Education requested \$450,000 this fiscal year to wipe out the waiting list, but funding lingers at about \$100,000.

Until the program can hire more full-time employees, Sims says it uses other state services to supplement the guidance parents already receive.

"That isn't a perfect solution, I'll grant you, but it's what we have right now."

In the meantime, a network of state services for families affected by autism continues to expand, offering various resources for parents as they make their way along the mysterious autism spectrum. □



Rachel Raubach of Springfield, a music therapist for the Hope Institute for Children and Families, conducts a session for children with autism.

Photograph by Bethany Jaeger

There's still hope

Greg and Marla Brotherton of Taylorville navigated uncharted waters when their son Ross was one of the first children diagnosed with autism in the area.

That was 23 years ago, when they didn't know what autism meant and were shocked when doctors told them to start looking into institutions. Only one year prior, Ross had been saying, "Mama" and "Daddy" and wanted to sit in their laps for them to read books.

"We tried just about everything, especially at first," Greg Brotherton says. "I heard one time that some boy swam with the dolphins, and that made him better. We didn't quite go that far, but we tried a lot of things."

The family worked with local schools to build each new classroom around Ross' needs.

Now Ross works in a local health clinic, assembling parts of a plastic spool and attending training to build his social skills.

Although the Brothertons say they couldn't be happier with the way the community has adapted to their needs, Lyn Becker, an education advocate with 20 years of experience in special education, says the state often falls behind in assisting adults.

"When it comes to kids and young adults leaving high school and moving into the workforce, it's really sad. There are very few supports out there."

One program designed to help young adults transition into life after school is an autism-specific institute for children of all ages, the Hope Institute for Children and Families in Springfield. The campus includes residential facilities where students can live while attending school.

The private institute opened more than 50 years ago and accepts children who can't succeed in their local public schools

because they need a "critical mass of services," says Mark Schmidt, chief communications officer for the institute. "We take the toughest cases."

About 70 percent of the students have an autism disorder.

The school uses fluorescent light bulbs that are less likely to overload hyperactive senses. Each classroom has its own playground. The halls are color-coded to help students navigate the building — yellow walls, for instance, lead to the school buses. Signs with arrows and pictures tell them which way to go to play basketball in the gym.

"It's all about flexibility," Schmidt says.

They also practice cooking, eating dinner at the table and making the bed or doing the laundry.

The key from age 14 and beyond is to be as independent as possible, says Cliff Hathaway, principal of the Hope School Therapeutic Learning Center. "We lay the foundation here," he says, and help students take step by step into adulthood.

The institute has come a long way from being financially strapped and program-matically adrift five years ago, according to Schmidt. By next year, the institute expects to achieve all of its goals of opening a one-stop shop for medical services, expanding existing facilities,

opening an autism school in Chicago and creating an autism network.

The network started with a state-sponsored project created by the General Assembly in 2003. Money trickles down from the Illinois Department of Human Services,

filters through the Hope Institute and disperses among a variety of community providers belonging to the Autism Program.

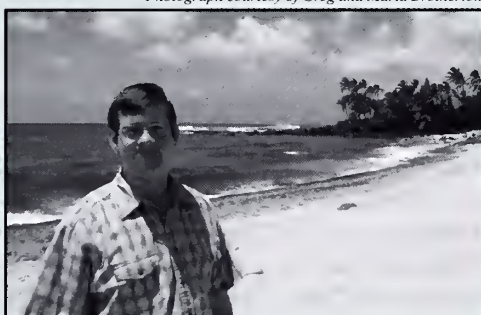
Known as TAP and headquartered in Springfield, the network includes 12 centers throughout the state and connects doctors, educators, counselors and families.

The catch is that the program enters into the state "budget battle" every year, but Schmidt says the community partners that make the decisions don't reinvent the wheel. They use the state grants to work with universities and other organizations so they can establish more regional centers across the state.

The ultimate goal is to find ways to help students reach their highest potential, recognizing that each child on the spectrum is unique.

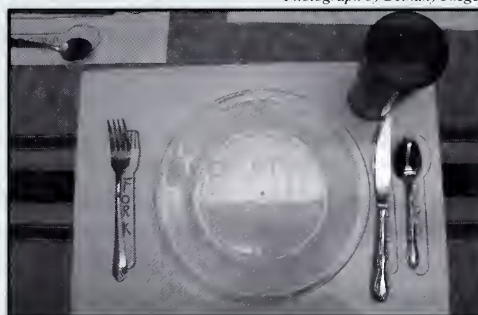
Bethany Jaeger

Photograph courtesy of Greg and Marla Brotherton



Ross Brotherton of Taylorville has autism and works in the community. His parents, Greg and Marla Brotherton, prepare him for change, including practicing riding on an airplane before taking him to Hawaii to celebrate their 25th wedding anniversary.

Photograph by Bethany Jaeger



Students at the Hope Institute for Children and Families in Springfield practice such skills as setting a dinner table that might help them obtain jobs in the community.

Some students need residential care for the rest of their lives. Others can eventually return to their home school districts.

All can attend Hope up to age 22.

"For those children, it is preparing them for life after Hope. That might be life at a group home. It might be life living with family members and holding down a job in a community. And we place a lot of emphasis on assessing the needs and the potential of each child."

Occupational therapy prepares them for potential employment.

They grow plants in a greenhouse on campus and sell the products at a local farmer's market. Job coaches teach them routine tasks such as operating a machine or putting pegs in holes. They work their way up to stocking shelves at a grocery store, working a cash register or serving meals at a restaurant.

Something in the water?

The notion of public good is sometimes lost in Illinois politics

by Christopher Z. Mooney

With the unrelenting string of political corruption trials in Chicago's federal court in recent years, I regularly find myself being asked: What's wrong with Illinois? Why do we have so much public corruption? Is it something in the water, or are politicians here just innately corrupt?

While I am quick to respond that Illinois has also produced many exemplary statesmen — Everett Dirksen, Paul Simon, Adlai Stevenson II, Abraham Lincoln — it is hard to argue the point. Most observers agree that Illinois politics are as corrupt as those in any other state, maybe even more so. A recent national survey of statehouse reporters ranked Illinois as the third most corrupt state in the nation. Even before Gov. Rod Blagojevich and his recent troubles, four of our previous eight governors were indicted, and three served time in prison. In addition, an attorney general, an auditor, a treasurer and several other state legislators were indicted and/or served time in the same period, along with dozens of lesser lights. Other states have scandals from time to time, but Illinois has a pervasive and continuous problem with public corruption that other states just don't have.

One way to understand public corruption is to think about it as resulting from a *perversion of attitudes about using government to pursue private goods rather than the public good*. That is, too many people working in and around Illinois government in policymaking and management positions are doing so

primarily for their own personal gain rather than for the common good of the state and its inhabitants. Compared with other states, a higher proportion of our policymakers seem to be in government less out of an impulse for public service than for the pursuit of their private benefit.

Of course, people aren't angels, and we do most things mainly for our personal gain, especially those pursuits to which we devote our working lives. Whether you're selling shoes or prosecuting criminals, you have to eat. But for some organizations, and especially for some positions in those organizations, the motivating force should be beyond simple personal gain. For example, when ministers go to work, they have a higher — literally — purpose than their weekly paycheck. We expect those who take up such a calling to do so for reasons other than self-aggrandizement, and for the most part, they do. When they don't, as in the recent cases of clergy who appear more interested in the trappings of their offices, we find it unseemly and illegitimate. Furthermore, people in policymaking positions in any organization must take a broader view of their role, looking beyond their own self-interests and pursuing the broader interests of the organization.

Even officers of for-profit public corporations are obligated to act for the good of their company, even at the expense of their own interests. Of course, when corporation officers put the personal before the public, the disapproval is perhaps less than that we reserve for errant ministers. But some such

acts are even subject to criminal prosecution — just ask Enron's Jeffrey Skilling.

Government is not church, true enough, but it has in common with the church, and even with public corporations, the fact that the organization's goal should not be the personal gain of any of its officials. Government is about organizing people to accomplish things that would not otherwise get done and to produce goods and services that a community decides are important but that private business can't or won't provide. We decide that certain public products are valuable — such as helping the poor, educating the young and discouraging crime — and then we coerce ourselves into sharing their cost through taxation. Sure, we might not think that every public good that government provides is important, but that's what our elected representatives are for, to hash out our differences and decide which public goods to provide. And when we believe that our representatives and the government workers they hire are acting in good faith, with the common good in mind, we are willing to go along with their decisions, pay our taxes and not complain too much.

But public goods are typically hard to define and evaluate, and few people have a clear incentive to advocate for them. On the other hand, private goods are easy to understand — they usually come down to money — and everyone has an incentive to pursue their own. In addition, for the typical government decision, the public good is spread so thinly that each citizen

doesn't care much about it, while the private good can be large and concentrated in a few people who therefore have a strong reason to fight for it. Typically, if it's easy to evaluate and target the benefits of a good or service, it is still manufactured or performed by the private sector, such as automobiles or pest control. Government provides the stuff that's hard to evaluate and that offers broad benefits that we can't (or won't) isolate to only some consumers, such as highway systems and law enforcement. And because the public good of these activities is spread thinly and their quality is hard to evaluate, they often get neglected in the struggle with private gain.

An example of the contrast and conflict between public and private goods that was in the news this past spring involved an obscure public entity called the Illinois Health Facilities Planning Board. The public good that the board is supposed to produce is health-care cost containment by coordinating things such as hospital construction and expansion. It is charged with preventing such situations as, for example, Peoria having a dozen \$1 million-plus MRI machines. That would lead to too many Peorians getting their insides scanned — after all, the owners

have to make the payments on this equipment. But the board also produces private benefits (if in a roundabout way), such as an MRI company selling its product, a construction company building a new facility or a hospital expanding its business.

Because the public good in this situation is debatable and diffused, while the private benefit is clear and focused, the MRI manufacturer, the construction contractor and the hospital have a much greater incentive than the general public to be involved in the health facilities board's decision-making process. So while the board is established to produce a public good, there is strong pressure on it for private good to prevail. And as we heard detailed in the trial of Antoin "Tony" Rezko, who was convicted of soliciting bribes to manipulate the health facilities board's decisions, without a strong personal ethic stiffening the spine of such public board members (or close media scrutiny and the fear of prosecution), the private good may win out.

Certainly, the tension between public goods and private gain exists everywhere in the country, so why does private gain seem to win out so much more often in Illinois? The root of our problem likely

goes back to the state's earliest days, with its Jacksonian spoils system and get-rich-quick frontier mentality. Gov. Thomas Ford's 1854 history of the state's early development demonstrates that public corruption is nothing new here. Just as personality is inordinately influenced by events early in life, the idea of government as a source of personal gain seems to have imprinted itself on Illinoisans in the first years of statehood. This tendency was fostered by the growth of the political machines that dominated politics in Chicago and elsewhere throughout the state through the middle of the 20th century. Political machines helped new immigrants integrate into the American social system, giving them a job, a bag of groceries or a load of coal in exchange for work with the party or simply their vote. As such, political machines focused almost exclusively on deriving private good from politics and government. While machines existed elsewhere, Illinois' were among the most efficient and longest-lasting in the country.

This attitude of pursuing private gain through government has been enhanced by a self-perpetuating process in Illinois. Corruption degrades public services as tax money is diverted for private purposes,

Scandals at the top

5 governors

Republican Lennington Small, 1921-1929
 Republican William Stratton, 1953-1961
 Democrat Otto Kerner, 1961-1968
 Democrat Daniel Walker, 1973-1977
 Republican George Ryan, 1999-2003

5 indictments

Small — in 1921 on charges that when he was treasurer he ran a money laundering scam
 Stratton — in 1965 on tax evasion charges related to campaign contributions
 Kerner — in 1971 on bribery, conspiracy, tax evasion and mail fraud charges
 Walker — in 1987 on bank fraud, misapplication of bank funds and perjury unrelated to his time in public office.
 Ryan — in 2003 on racketeering, mail fraud, filing false tax returns, making false statements to the FBI and diverting campaign funds for personal use

3 convictions

Kerner — in 1973. Entered prison in July 1974 and was released in May 1975
 Walker — in 1987. Served 18 months of a seven-year sentence
 Ryan — in 2006. Sentenced to six-and-a-half years. Currently serving in a federal prison in Indiana

2 acquittals

Small — in 1921. However, four jurors later got state jobs.
 Stratton — in 1965. His defense: Home improvements, dresses for his wife and other expenses to enrich his image were indirect campaign expenses, and cash he didn't report to the Internal Revenue Service came to him as gifts from admirers.

The current governor

Rod Blagojevich's administration is under federal investigation. If federal prosecutors decide to accuse him of criminal wrongdoing, the majority of Illinois governors to serve in the last half century will have been indicted on corruption charges.

Note: Democrat Joel Aldrich Matteson, 1853-1857, was accused of embezzlement by redeeming old canal project scrip worth more than \$200,000. A jury voted to indict, then reversed itself. Later a Sangamon County court ruled that Matteson owed the state \$253,723.77

SOURCES: *Illinois Governors: Mostly Good and Competent, Illinois Issues*

A recent poll revealed that only 14 percent of Illinoisans think the state is on the right track, and only 26 percent approve of the job the governor is doing.

something Lt. Gov. Pat Quinn calls a “corruption tax.” Like corruption, it is difficult to judge the quality of state government services without some basis for comparison. But a recent study by the Pew Center on the States found that Illinois state government’s overall performance was tied with several states for the third worst in the nation, ahead of only New Hampshire and Rhode Island. (Not coincidentally, perhaps, Rhode Island is one of the two states found to be more corrupt than Illinois in that survey of state-house journalists.) And the never-ending public scandals that play out in the press and the courts decrease public satisfaction with government even beyond the effect of these degraded services. A recent poll revealed that only 14 percent of Illinoisans think the state is on the right track, and only 26 percent approve of the job the governor is doing. While Blagojevich’s unique problems and the current economic downturn are partially to blame for the abysmal numbers, they demonstrate general deep dissatisfaction with government in the state.

So, what can be done? After almost 200 years of imbalance between the pursuit of public and private interest in Illinois government, how can we begin to tip the balance more toward the public good? Such a deep-seated cultural problem will not be easy to fix. But given the extremes to which we have come, it should be possible to move some way in the right direction. Fortunately, there is a pretty clear prescription that we can follow.

First, at a minimum, when the pursuit of private interest crosses the line into illegality, we must investigate vigorously and thoroughly and punish severely. We must pursue public crimes and ethics violations with the same tenacity that we pursue street crime. If we do, perhaps

public officials will focus on the public interest and avoid the private, if for no other reason than to avoid prison and humiliation. Fortunately, we have a top corruption-buster on the job, Patrick Fitzgerald, the U.S. attorney for the Northern District of Illinois. After the most recent corruption conviction, Fitzgerald said of Illinois public officials, “If their morals don’t get them [to act honestly], then I hope that the fear of going to jail will.” Perhaps that sort of consistent and tough prosecution will not only flush out the worst offenders, it will also scare straight those who might be inclined to corruption in the future.

Second, we need to beef up our public institutions that are designed to reduce the opportunities and incentives to pursue private gain at the expense of public good. Serious campaign finance reform; laws to strengthen oversight of lobbying, contracting and hiring; and empowering inspectors general throughout state government are a good place to start. Maybe the continuing corruption prosecutions and ongoing political crises in Springfield will generate enough heat to force that sort of reform through the General Assembly, moving Illinois toward the American mainstream.

This spring, the General Assembly passed a “pay-to-play” bill, which, if signed by Blagojevich, would limit companies with more than \$50,000 worth of state contracts from making contributions to the state officers with authority over those contracts. This is an instance of that sort of shotgun wedding between political reform and Illinois political culture [the bill was sitting on the governor’s desk at press time with the threat of “improvement”]. But most states don’t let corporations contribute anything to political candidates, and they limit the size of campaign contributions from individuals to, say, \$1,000 or \$5,000. In Illinois, there is no limit. In fact, the *Chicago Tribune* reported that Blagojevich received 235 contributions of exactly \$25,000, along with many of a higher value. This is the amount of money that at the very least raises the appearance of impropriety. One wonders why \$25,000 was such a popular contribution.

Third, we need strong moral leadership from the top. The governor is the most powerful and visible public figure in the

state, and we need one who is willing to set a clear tone that in Illinois, government is for the public good, not private gain. Of course, Blagojevich used the language of reform when he ran for governor. But given recent testimony and media reports, his pledge to “change the way we do business in Illinois” now rings not only hollow but biting irony. However, the success of his campaign’s use of that phrase, cynical or not, demonstrated a deep hunger among the voters for a change in Illinois’ political culture. Any subsequent corruption in this administration will further fuel the disgust and distrust with government that the George Ryan administration helped raise to unprecedented levels.

Finally, and just as important, voters need to pay closer attention to the substance of political campaigns and the independent information they get from the media about the candidates. Voters themselves hold significant blame for the public corruption in Illinois. In a democracy, at a minimum, citizens have the responsibility to be informed and to punish those who are more interested in their private good than the public good. Americans have always been wary of government, but the more political corruption we see, hear and read about and the worse government services we receive, the more those prejudices are reinforced. “They’re all a bunch of crooks,” we say, and we disengage from the political process.

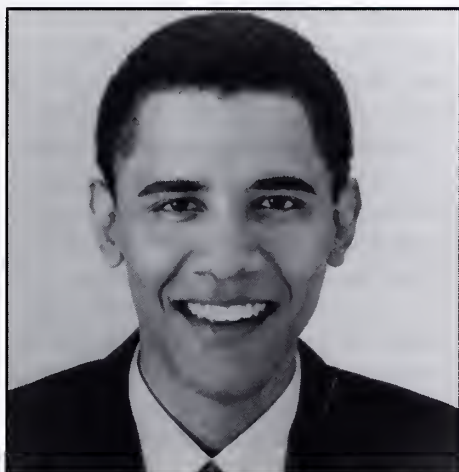
Of course they aren’t all crooks, but when some of them are, and when they are continuously “perp walked” by federal prosecutors, people deepen their contempt for government. And when the average person stops paying attention, stops voting, stops valuing government, the only people who are left caring and participating are the crooks — along with the political extremists, interest groups, federal prosecutors and political scientists. Or rather, while the percentage of crooks in government is small, it gets larger as the rest of us stop participating. In the end, if we don’t pay attention to independent information about our government and political candidates, then we end up with the government we deserve. □

Christopher Z. Mooney is a professor of political studies with the Institute of Government and Public Affairs at the

WHY ORGANIZE?

Problems and promise in the inner city

by Barack Obama



U.S. Sen. Barack Obama during his tenure in the state Senate.

Editor's note: Barack Obama wrote this article for Illinois Issues in 1988, while he was a community organizer in Chicago. It later became part of a book, After Alinsky: Community Organizing in Illinois, published by Illinois Issues in 1990. We are republishing it this month to show, in his own words, some of the Democratic presidential candidate's earliest influences in Illinois.

We were unable to find a similar work by Republican candidate John McCain relating to Illinois, but McCain's republished 1973 account of his experience as a prisoner of war in Vietnam can be found on the U.S. News & World Report Web site at www.usnews.com/articles/news/2008/01/28/john-mccain-prisoner-of-war-a-first-person-account.html. A link to that article also is available on our Web site, <http://illinoisissues.uis.edu>.

Over the past five years, I've often had a difficult time explaining my profession to folks. Typical is a remark a public school administrative aide made to me one bleak January morning, while I waited to deliver some flyers to a group of confused and angry parents who had discovered the presence of asbestos in their school.

"Listen, Obama," she began. "You're a bright young man, Obama. You went to college, didn't you?"

I nodded.

"I just cannot understand why a bright young man like you would go to college, get that degree and become a community organizer."

"Why's that?"

"Cause the pay is low, the hours is long, and don't nobody appreciate you." She shook her head in puzzlement as she wandered back to attend to her duties.

I've thought back on that conversation more than once during the time I've organized with the Developing Communities Project, based in Chicago's far south side. Unfortunately, the answers that come to mind haven't been as simple as her question. Probably the shortest one is this: It needs to be done, and not enough folks are doing it.

The debate as to how black and other dispossessed people can forward their lot in America is not new. From W.E.B. DuBois to Booker T. Washington to Marcus Garvey to Malcolm X to Martin Luther King, this internal debate has raged between integration and nationalism,

between accommodation and militancy, between sit-down strikes and boardroom negotiations. The lines between these strategies have never been simply drawn, and the most successful black leadership has recognized the need to bridge these seemingly divergent approaches. During the early years of the Civil Rights movement, many of these issues became submerged in the face of the clear oppression of segregation. The debate was no longer whether to protest, but how militant must that protest be to win full citizenship for blacks.

Twenty years later, the tensions between strategies have reemerged, in part due to the recognition that for all the accomplishments of the 1960s, the majority of blacks continue to suffer from second-class citizenship. Related to this are the failures — real, perceived and fabricated — of the Great Society programs initiated by Lyndon Johnson. Facing these realities, at least three major strands of earlier movements are apparent.

First, and most publicized, has been the surge of political empowerment around the country. Harold Washington and Jesse Jackson are but two striking examples of how the energy and passion of the Civil Rights movement have been channeled into bids for more traditional political power. Second, there has been a resurgence in attempts to foster economic development in the black community, whether through local entrepreneurial efforts, increased hiring of black contractors and corporate managers, or



Barack Obama in February 2007 as he announces his intention to run for president

Buy Black campaigns. Third, and perhaps least publicized, has been grass-roots community organizing, which builds on indigenous leadership and direct action.

Proponents of electoral politics and economic development strategies can point to substantial accomplishments in the past 10 years. An increase in the number of black public officials offers at least the hope that government will be more responsive to inner-city constituents. Economic development programs can provide structural improvements and jobs to blighted communities.

In my view, however, neither approach offers lasting hope of real change for the inner city unless undergirded by a systematic approach to community organization. This is because the issues of the inner city are more complex and deeply rooted than ever before. Blatant discrimination has been replaced by institutional racism; problems like teen pregnancy, gang involvement and drug abuse cannot be solved by money alone. At the same time, as Professor William Julius Wilson of the University of Chicago has pointed out, the inner city's economy and its government support have declined, and middle-class blacks are leaving the neighborhoods they once helped to sustain.

Neither electoral politics nor a strategy of economic self-help and internal development can by themselves respond to these new challenges. The election of Harold Washington in Chicago or of Richard Hatcher in Gary were not

enough to bring jobs to inner-city neighborhoods or cut a 50 percent drop-out rate in the schools, although they did achieve an important symbolic effect. In fact, much-needed black achievement in prominent city positions has put us in the awkward position of administering underfunded systems neither equipped nor eager to address the needs of the urban poor and being forced to compromise their interests to more powerful demands from other sectors.

Self-help strategies show similar limitations. Although both laudable and necessary, they too often ignore the fact that without a stable community, a well-educated population, an adequate infrastructure and an informed and employed market, neither new nor well-established companies will be willing to base themselves in the inner city and still compete in the international marketplace. Moreover, such approaches can and have become thinly veiled excuses for cutting back on social programs, which are anathema to a conservative agenda.

In theory, community organizing provides a way to merge various strategies for neighborhood empowerment. Organizing begins with the premise that (1) the problems facing inner-city communities do not result from a lack of effective solutions, but from a lack of power to implement these solutions; (2) that the only way for communities to build long-term power is by organizing people and money around a common vision; and (3) that a viable organization can only be

achieved if a broadly based indigenous leadership — and not one or two charismatic leaders — can knit together the diverse interests of their local institutions.

This means bringing together churches, block clubs, parent groups and any other institutions in a given community to pay dues, hire organizers, conduct research, develop leadership, hold rallies and education campaigns, and begin drawing up plans on a whole range of issues — jobs, education, crime, etc. Once such a vehicle is formed, it holds the power to make politicians, agencies and corporations more responsive to community needs. Equally important, it enables people to break their crippling isolation from each other, to reshape their mutual values and expectations and rediscover the possibilities of acting collaboratively — the prerequisites of any successful self-help initiative.

By using this approach, the Developing Communities Project and other organizations in Chicago's inner city have achieved some impressive results. Schools have been made more accountable — job training programs have been established; housing has been renovated and built; city services have been provided; parks have been refurbished; and crime and drug problems have been curtailed. Additionally, plain folk have been able to access the levers of power, and a sophisticated pool of local civic leadership has been developed.

But organizing the black community faces enormous problems as well. One

problem is the not entirely undeserved skepticism organizers face in many communities. To a large degree, Chicago was the birthplace of community organizing, and the urban landscape is littered with the skeletons of previous efforts. Many of the best-intentioned members of the community have bitter memories of such failures and are reluctant to muster up renewed faith in the process.

A related problem involves the aforementioned exodus from the inner city of financial resources, institutions, role models and jobs. Even in areas that have not been completely devastated, most households now stay afloat with two incomes. Traditionally, community organizing has drawn support from women, who due to tradition and social discrimination had the time and the inclination to participate in what remains an essentially voluntary activity. Today the majority of women in the black community work full time, many are the sole parent, and all have to split themselves between work, raising children, running a household and maintaining some semblance of a personal life — all of which makes voluntary activities lower on the priority list. Additionally, the slow exodus of the black middle class into the suburbs means that people shop in one neighborhood, work in another, send their child to a school across town and go to church someplace other than the place where they live. Such geographical dispersion creates real problems in building a sense of investment and common purpose in any particular neighborhood.

Finally, community organizations and organizers are hampered by their own dogmas about the style and substance of organizing. Most still practice what Professor John McKnight of Northwestern University calls a “consumer advocacy” approach, with a focus on wrestling services and resources from the outside powers that be. Few are thinking of harnessing the internal productive capacities, both in terms of money and people, that already exist in communities.

Our thinking about media and public relations is equally stunted when compared to the high-powered direct mail and video approaches successfully used by conservative organizations like the Moral Majority. Most importantly, low

salaries, the lack of quality training and ill-defined possibilities for advancement discourage the most talented young blacks from viewing organizing as a legitimate career option. As long as our best and brightest youth see more opportunity in climbing the corporate ladder than in building the communities from which they came, organizing will remain decidedly handicapped.

None of these problems is insurmountable. In Chicago, the Developing Communities Project and other community organizations have pooled resources to form cooperative think tanks like the Gamaliel Foundation. These provide both a formal setting where experienced organizers can rework old models to fit new realities and a healthy

To a large degree, Chicago was the birthplace of community organizing, and the urban landscape is littered with the skeletons of previous efforts.

environment for the recruitment and training of new organizers. At the same time the leadership vacuum and disillusionment following the death of Harold Washington have made both the media and people in the neighborhoods more responsive to the new approaches community organizing can provide.

Nowhere is the promise of organizing more apparent than in the traditional black churches. Possessing tremendous financial resources, membership and — most importantly — values and biblical traditions that call for empowerment and liberation, the black church is clearly a slumbering giant in the political and economic landscape of cities like Chicago. A fierce independence among black pastors and a preference for more traditional approaches to social involvement (supporting candidates for office,

providing shelters for the homeless) have prevented the black church from bringing its full weight to bear on the political, social and economic arenas of the city.

Over the past few years, however, more and more young and forward-thinking pastors have begun to look at community organizations such as the Developing Communities Project in the far south side and GREAT in the Grand Boulevard area as a powerful tool for living the social gospel, one which can educate and empower entire congregations and not just serve as a platform for a few prophetic leaders. Should a mere 50 prominent black churches, out of the thousands that exist in cities like Chicago, decide to collaborate with a trained organizing staff, enormous positive changes could be wrought in the education, housing, employment and spirit of inner-city black communities, changes that would send powerful ripples throughout the city.

In the meantime, organizers will continue to build on local successes, learn from their numerous failures and recruit and train their small but growing core of leadership — mothers on welfare, postal workers, CTA drivers and school teachers, all of whom have a vision and memories of what communities can be. In fact, the answer to the original question — why organize? — resides in these people. In helping a group of housewives sit across the negotiating table with the mayor of America's third largest city and hold their own, or a retired steelworker stand before a TV camera and give voice to the dreams he has for his grandchild's future, one discovers the most significant and satisfying contribution organizing can make.

In return, organizing teaches as nothing else does the beauty and strength of everyday people. Through the songs of the church and the talk on the stoops, through the hundreds of individual stories of coming up from the South and finding any job that would pay, of raising families on threadbare budgets, of losing some children to drugs and watching others earn degrees and land jobs their parents could never aspire to — it is through these stories and songs of dashed hopes and powers of endurance, of ugliness and strife, subtlety and laughter, that organizers can shape a sense of community not only for others, but for themselves. □

MORTGAGE CRISIS

Foreclosures highlight the need for a more balanced housing policy

by Julia Stasch

If there is one thing we should learn from the current mortgage foreclosure crisis, it is that homeownership is not always the best choice for every American.

Certainly, there is the potential to build wealth through equity, the emotional appeal of a home of one's own, and in the past, the easy availability of attractive mortgages. But the hard truth is that America's single-minded pursuit of the promise of homeownership is having tragic consequences for many people in Chicago and other communities across the country.

Nearly half of all subprime loans were made in low-income communities, often to borrowers who did not fully understand the loan terms and may have little or no capacity to repay them, according to a report from Harvard University's Joint Center for Housing Studies.

Despite the high rates of foreclosure so far, industry experts predict that loans that originated in 2006 and 2007 will be the most foreclosure-prone in history. While some families will be able to stay in their homes or purchase others, many will join the increasing ranks of renters, putting even greater pressure on the shrinking supply of more affordable homes and apartments.

While they have been largely ignored by the media, renters also are affected by the foreclosure crisis. In 2007, nearly 20 percent of foreclosure actions affected one- to four-unit properties with an

Fair market rent for a two-bedroom apartment in Illinois is \$844. To afford this — without paying more than 30 percent of income on housing — would require an annual income of \$33,758.

SOURCE: *National Low Income Housing Coalition*

absentee landlord. In most states, even stable renters with excellent payment histories lose their leases and are evicted when their building is foreclosed. In Chicago, 35 percent of the almost 14,000 foreclosure filings last year were in small, multifamily buildings, affecting potentially thousands of renters. In some neighborhoods, the percentage of such properties runs as high as 60 percent to 80 percent.

With subprime mortgages concentrated in minority and urban communities, the presence of vacant, boarded-up buildings threatens the stability and appeal of neighborhoods, especially those recently on their way up as part of America's urban renaissance. The overall economy, too, is affected, as the overheated mortgage market makes a painful correction, involving individuals, lenders, investors and major corporations alike.

Our country's almost exclusive focus on homeownership in recent years has left

us woefully unprepared to absorb an increasing number of rental households — one million in 2007 — let alone provide rental spaces for those who have lost their homes due to the foreclosure crisis. Construction of rental units is down to only a third of its 1986 high. And there is a particular lack of affordable rental housing. Across the country, it requires an average wage of \$16.31 per hour — 2½ times the new federal minimum wage — to rent a modest two-bedroom apartment. In 2006, more than half of the lowest-income renters spent more than half of their incomes on housing, leaving very little money for other basic needs such as food, transportation, clothing and health care.

We need to address the effects of the subprime mortgage "meltdown," but we also need to acknowledge a simple truth. Virtually all of us are renters at some time in our lives, either by choice or because it is the only workable option. We need to strip the myth from homeownership, restore respect to rental housing and seek and sustain a more balanced national housing policy.

Such a policy would make affordable homeownership possible without exposing borrowers to devastating penalties and changes in terms. It would provide incentives for the construction of new homes and rental apartments for people of modest means. It would encourage residential development near places of employment and transportation.

It would help local communities to keep homes in productive use and maintain the stability of neighborhoods as markets change over time. And a balanced housing policy would stem the loss of existing housing by making it easier to preserve and improve as many

affordable homes as possible.

Harry Truman said, "A decent standard of housing for all is one of the irreducible obligations of modern civilization." A thoughtful, balanced national housing policy would help us go a long way toward meeting

that obligation. □

Julia Stasch is vice president for human and community development at the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. She is a former commissioner of housing for the City of Chicago and co-chair of The Preservation Compact.

From the report *America's Rental Housing: The Key to a Balanced National Policy*

- As early as 2004, some 240,000 subprime home mortgages were seriously delinquent (with payments 60 days late or more and/or just entering into foreclosure).
- As more and more households struggled to buy in the face of rapidly rising home prices, the number of seriously delinquent subprime home mortgages rose to 750,000 in 2007.
- More than 12 percent of all subprime loans were seriously delinquent by the end of 2007, compared to 1.7 percent of prime loans.
- Although the mortgage market meltdown only emerged as the dominant national housing policy issue in 2007, serious mortgage delinquencies and foreclosures have been on the rise in Ohio, Michigan and Indiana for more than 10 years.
- The plentiful supply of mortgage capital also fed a substantial rise in high-risk lending to absentee owners of one- to four-unit rental properties. While varying from one state to the next, in 2007 nearly one in five of all foreclosure actions started were on loans made to nonresident owners.
- Mirroring the concentration of subprime lending, foreclosures are also highly concentrated in the lowest-income and minority communities where many of the most disadvantaged renters live. Nationwide, loans in low-income minority communities are more than twice as likely to be foreclosed than loans in high-income white areas.
- High levels of foreclosures produce collateral damage that can easily destabilize already vulnerable communities,

by depressing property values, lowering local property tax revenue, and imposing additional costs on cash-strapped public agencies.

- Mortgage foreclosures are adding to the number of units held off the market, while the weak home-buying market also is helping to expand the supply of higher-priced rentals as owners attempt to rent out their newly vacant condominiums and single-family homes. But because most renters do not have adequate income to take advantage of these opportunities, the market has limited ability to absorb the current excess supply.
- After averaging just 0.7 percent annual growth from 2003 to 2006, the number of renter households jumped by 2.8 percent or nearly 1 million in 2007.
- The minority share of renter households increased from 37 percent in 1995 to 43 percent in 2005, with Hispanic renters accounting for nearly half of the minority gains. The number of black and other minority renter households rose more modestly, while that of white households fell by about 433,000.
- Of the nearly 37 million renter households in 2005, one in six were headed by an immigrant. More than 80 percent of the 1.6 million immigrants who had lived in the United States for five years or less in 2005 rented their housing, though only one-third of the immigrants who came to the United States before 1990 remained renters in 2005, nearly matching the share of same-aged native-born households.
- Some 19 percent of all households reported a change of residence between 2003 and 2005, including 1.9 million owners who became renters. Over this

period, homeowners in the bottom income quartile were three times more likely than those in the top income quartile to switch from owning to renting.

- The mean debt of renters in the lowest income quartile surged 62 percent in real terms, growing from \$3,200 in 1995 to \$5,200 in 2004. While up across all age and racial groups, mean debt for renter households with heads aged 55 and older increased by 76 percent, to \$8,800, and for minorities by 61 percent to \$7,900.
- Last year, completions of multifamily units for rent fell to 169,000 units — just two-thirds of the 2002 figure and only one-third of the 1986 record high.
- The national median gross rent rose 2.7 percent in real terms from 2001 to 2006 while the median renter income fell by 8.4 percent.
- Nearly half of all renters paid more than 30 percent of their incomes for housing in 2006, and about a quarter spent more than 50 percent. Among renters in the bottom income quartile, fully 52 percent spent more than half their incomes on housing in 2006, up from 47 percent in 2001.
- In 2006, 42.6 percent of all working families did not earn enough to afford an appropriately sized housing unit.
- From 1995 to 2005, nearly 2.2 million (or 6 percent) of all rental units were demolished or otherwise permanently removed from the inventory, including 1.4 million units with inflation-adjusted rents of \$600 or less in 1995.

Jones leaves a legacy

Senate President **Emil Jones Jr.** is ending a 35-year career in the General Assembly, the last six as presiding officer of his chamber. He plans to retire in January.

His departure further challenges Gov. Rod Blagojevich in advancing his agenda. "[Jones] certainly was his No. 1 ally. He was the Gen. Patton to his presidency," says Sen. Donne Trotter, Jones' majority caucus whip.

The Blagojevich-Jones alliance pushed for expanded health care, increased education funding and increased minimum wage; yet many of their other proposals stalled in the House under Speaker Michael Madigan.

But Trotter says Jones leaves a caucus with many well-trained members who are well-positioned to take over.

Election of a new Senate president requires a majority vote by chamber members and results in a two-year term. Numerous Senate Democrats are in line to try to win the presidency, which controls a leadership team and determines the flow of legislation, including which measures get called for debate.

Under Jones, the Senate Democrats gained an exceptional majority of 37 members to the Republicans' 22. Yet

Jones' caucus includes sub-groups with diverse interests and allegiances, creating a challenge for Jones to utilize his "super majority" on such major initiatives as expanding health care programs and expanding gaming to pay for a capital program.

Jones also struggled to accomplish his longstanding passion of education funding reform. For years he supported relieving local property taxes and relying more on state income taxes to fund public education. However, he changed positions in 2006 to support Blagojevich's proposal to levy what became a widely unpopular gross receipts tax on business profits. Blagojevich repeatedly promised to veto income or sales tax increases.

But Jones' legacy does include being the longest-serving Democratic Caucus leader since 1970.

He also teamed with Blagojevich last fiscal year to grant the largest one-year increase to education, totaling \$400 million, and offer state-sponsored preschool to low- and middle-income children. He also spearheaded criminal justice reforms that require interrogations to be videotaped in death penalty cases.

Campaign adjustments

State Rep. **Annazette Collins**, a Chicago Democrat, apologized for filing inaccurate reports about her political campaign's finances after a nonprofit organization questioned her filings with the Illinois State Board of Elections.

The Chicago-based Campaign for Political Reform filed a complaint after Collins reported her campaign received \$0 in donations and spent \$0 from 2005 to 2007.

Collins later disclosed that she received \$110,301 in contributions and spent \$120,794 during those three years.

Kent Redfield, professor of political studies and public policy at the University of Illinois at Springfield, helped file the complaint. In a statement, he said: "A simple search of the State Board of Elections' Web site revealed that Collins was raising and spending campaign funds. At the same time that her committee reported no contributions, several other committees were reporting transfers of thousands of dollars to the Collins committee. It is unacceptable for the board to neglect its responsibilities in this manner and rely on the public to pursue remedies for these violations."

Daniel White, executive director of the State Board of Elections, says: "The reports, unless we have evidence to the contrary, are accepted. However, we do periodic reviews of the reports. I believe there was a review that was ongoing when the complaint was filed." Since the Collins case, White says, he has asked staff working on campaign disclosure functions to take a closer look at filings if they show no expenditures and no contributions and the committee represents an active candidate. "So that's what we will be doing in the future."

OBIT

Maureen Murphy

The former state representative of Chicago's southwest suburbs died August 9. She was 55.

Born in Chicago, she lived in Evergreen Park and was the first woman to chair the Cook County Republican Party, from 2002 to 2004. She also was the first woman, first Republican and first suburban resident elected to the Cook County Board of Review, according to the Cook County Republican Party. Her 26 years of public service ended as a commissioner in 2007.

"Maureen was a fighter, a person who cared deeply about the Republican Party and someone who wasn't afraid to stand up for what she believed in," said Cook County Republican Chairman Lee Roupas in a statement. "We have had no one quite like her in our caucus over the years, and she will undoubtedly be missed."

Her public service started in the early 1980s as vice president of the Evergreen Park High School District 231 board. She later served as a Worth Township clerk and Republican committeeman. She also was a real estate broker.

She was elected to the 36th House District in 1993 and served until 1997, having chaired the Revenue Committee, as well as serving on committees for local governments and education.

People on the move

• **Lucio Guerrero** and **Kelley Quinn** are heading Gov. Rod Blagojevich's communications office. Both are based in Chicago. Guerrero replaces **Abby Ottenhoff**, who resigned after five years as the governor's Chicago spokeswoman. Ottenhoff previously spent time as an aide to House Speaker Michael Madigan.

Guerrero has been deputy assessor at the Cook County assessor's office since 2006. Before then, he was a reporter for the *Chicago Sun-Times* and its affiliate, the *Post-Tribune* in Indiana. He also worked for newspapers in Delaware and Florida, according to the governor's office. Quinn is the new deputy director of communications. She switched from being spokeswoman for the governor's budget office. That position will be filled shortly.

On the record

Esther Cepeda, former columnist for the *Chicago Sun-Times*, now manages communications and marketing functions for the Illinois Student Assistance Commission. The state agency provides college scholarships, grants and loans.

Cepeda still writes a syndicated column called "600 Words" online and writes about anything from politics to sports from a Latino perspective.

"I'm writing about the kinds of things that nobody else writes about, but they're all based in research and having that information that perhaps the average person wouldn't get," she says.

That often includes articles about education, not only because she used to work as a bilingual teacher in low-income schools in the Chicago suburbs, but also because she prioritizes higher education.

She was the first person in her family to attend college.

"It's very important for me personally to make sure that people know they need to get to college, how they can do it, that they can do it. So joining an organization that is completely dedicated to that seemed like a tremendous opportunity. Plus, it let me use all those marketing and business skills that I have that I really enjoy using."

Her job includes overseeing sales, marketing, public relations, communications, advertising and media outreach. She doesn't

Photograph by Rich Hein, courtesy of the Chicago Sun-Times



Esther Cepeda

wear all of those hats. Rather, she ensures that the people who wear those hats have the resources they need and can meet the agency's goals, she says.

She earned a bachelor's degree in journalism with a minor in music and psychology from Southern Illinois University Carbondale. She attended the Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University in Evanston, where she received a full scholarship and studied integrated marketing communications. She also worked toward a master's degree in special education from Roosevelt University in Schaumburg.

She briefly worked in marketing and public relations for a variety of Chicago companies.

Before joining the *Chicago Sun-Times* in 2006, she was a freelance writer for a newspaper in Lake County and contributed to the *Chicago Sun-Times* and the *Daily Herald*.

In a news release, Andrew Davis, chairman of the Illinois Student Assistance Commission, described Cepeda as "an accomplished journalist, creative thinker and energetic advocate. She is a role model for young Latinas, a key target audience for ISAC's message."

Update

Donald Snyder Jr., former director of the Illinois Department of Corrections, will start his two-year prison sentence this month after he pleaded guilty to accepting kickbacks from state contractors. (See *Illinois Issues*, September 2007, page 34.)

For updated news see the *Illinois Issues* Web site at <http://illinoisissues.uis.edu>

Big people on campus

Paula Allen-Meares is returning to the University of Illinois as the new chancellor of the Chicago campus.

She starts in January.

She arrives from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, where she is a Norma Radin Collegiate Professor of Social Work and professor of education.

She earned her bachelor's degree from State University of New York at Buffalo.

Having earned two degrees from the University of Illinois, a master's and a doctorate, and having later served as dean and professor in the university's School of Social Work, her appointment felt like a homecoming, said Chairman of the Board of Trustees Lawrence Eppley.

"Paula came to Illinois from New York as a freshly minted college graduate focused on a career in social work and helping those who cannot always help themselves as well as they might like," he said in prepared remarks.

University President B. Joseph White added his remarks, "When it comes to hard work, I've never met anyone who sets a pace like Paula Allen-Meares."

Her career at both universities in Illinois and Michigan included developing interdisciplinary degree and research programs. She also created partnerships with other research bodies and raised money for financial aid and endowments.

"At the end of the day, it is all about excellence, relevance and collaborative spirit," she said in prepared remarks.

She also leads many national research projects involving social work and education, often focusing on mental health of poor children, adolescent pregnancy and African-American parents and communities. She holds numerous national leadership positions and is a member of the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies nonprofit organization based in Washington, D.C.



Paula Allen-Meares

Her husband, Henry Meares, also graduated from the Urbana-Champaign campus and served as principal of University High School in Urbana.

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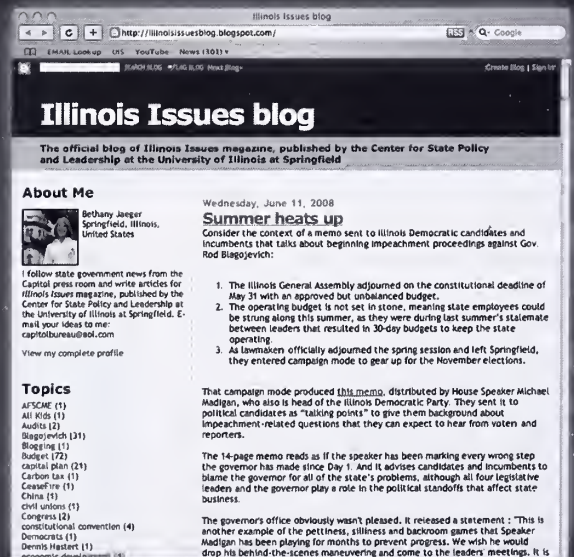
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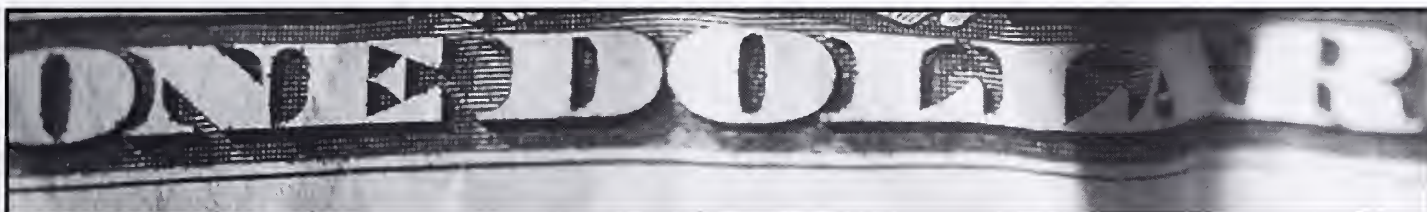


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A voice for the most vulnerable and frail

The Illinois Long Term Care council commends you and your staff for the excellent articles highlighting Illinois' neglectful lack of funding for human services, as reported in "Last place: Human services advocates hope to elbow their way toward the front of the line" (see *Illinois Issues*, June, page 16, and at illinoisissues.uis.edu, June archive).

A copy of your Editor's Note in the issue, "Illinoisans have a moral responsibility and reason for concern," was distributed at the June 10 council meeting by Mr. Michael O'Donnell, a council member and executive director of the East Central Illinois Area Agency on Aging that serves 16 counties. The efforts to increase the personal needs allowance and the overall critical need for adequate state funding to provider services and protections for vulnerable older adults who need long term care have been priorities for this council.

The Illinois Long Term Care Council was established in 2003 for the purpose of making recommendations to state officials

and the public on long term care issues of older adults and the need for protection of long term care facility residents by the Illinois Longer Term Care Ombudsman Program. The council advocates for a broad-based approach to addressing increased costs and delayed payments for human services.

Many of these human service providers are not-for-profit and have experienced ongoing, unstable financial situations, yet are expected to provide the needed services in the continuum of long-term care settings, from home and community to nursing homes and hospitals.

This most recent issue of the most highly respected public policy publication in the state gives encouragement to those working daily to provide a public voice to legislators for this state's most vulnerable and frail citizens — a voice that will not be silenced.

*Mary Killough
Nancy Flowers
Co-chairs,
Long Term Care Council*



Write us

Your comments are welcome. Please keep them brief (250 words). We reserve the right to excerpt them.

Letters to the Editor
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Staff shortage seen

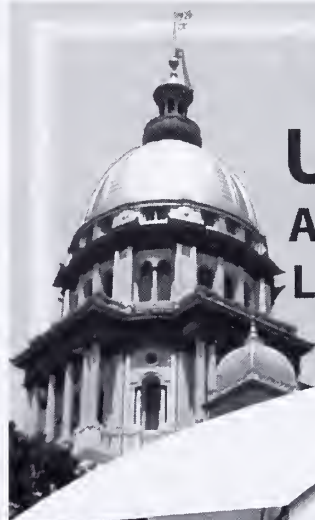
My dad is a member at the veterans' home in Manteno (see *Illinois Issues*, June, page 31). In the last two years, I have seen the decline of care due to being understaffed. There are many nurses and certified nursing assistants, most of whom are dedicated and go above and beyond.

I know that new members are being admitted at this time and without enough staff to properly care for them. The residences are deplorably filthy, again due to the lack of needed staff to keep the facility clean.

I do not agree that these facilities should be allowed to run with a staff that is not 100 percent. The vets should have the very best care, which they deserve. This is a situation that needs to be improved as soon as possible. I am tired of the bureaucracy and the politics, which appear to be more important than doing the best for the men and women who fought for our country. There simply has to be a better and more expedient way to hire the staff that is necessary for the care of our veterans.

*Sheila Devoy
New Carlisle, IN*

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Charles N. Wheeler III



How far can the governor go in rewriting legislation?

by Charles N. Wheeler III

When Gov. Rod Blagojevich unveiled his "Rewrite To Do Right" campaign last month, the temptation was to see the governor's latest public relations brainchild as just another way of sticking a finger into House Speaker Michael Madigan's eye.

Blagojevich promised to issue amendatory vetoes to 50 pending bills "to make them better" and force lawmakers to accept ideas that didn't make it through the normal legislative process.

"Unfortunately, Mike Madigan has decided to oppose every initiative we propose," Blagojevich told reporters in Chicago. "What are you supposed to do to do right by the people?"

To label the new initiative as simply the latest chapter in the ongoing Blagojevich-Madigan hostilities is understandable. After all, the governor has spent much of his second term berating his fellow Chicago Democrat for not going along with the chief executive's pet ideas. Moreover, the new gambit comes with a headline-grabbing nickname and populist rhetoric, Blagojevich trademarks.

Underlying whatever personal animosity that lies behind the 50-bill scheme, though, is a serious constitutional question that predates the current chief executive by decades: How far may a governor go in rewriting legislation?

The Illinois Constitution simply declares that a governor "may return a bill

The Illinois Supreme Court has suggested that a governor can't substitute an entire new bill via amendatory veto, nor change its "fundamental purpose," nor make "substantial or expansive" revisions to a measure.

together with specific recommendations for change" that becomes law if accepted by majority votes in both chambers. Lawmakers also may override the amendatory veto by three-fifths votes. If they do neither, the measure dies.

The Illinois Supreme Court has suggested that a governor can't substitute an entire new bill via amendatory veto, nor change its "fundamental purpose," nor make "substantial or expansive" revisions to a measure. But a governor is not limited merely to correcting errors, as some of the Constitution's drafters expected, and voters turned down a 1974 amendment that would have so limited the power. Still, the justices have yet to find an instance in which a governor went too far, and no clear guidelines have

emerged from the four cases testing the provision.

Madigan's concern about former Gov. Jim Thompson's prolific use of the veto pen led the House speaker to engineer a 1989 revision in House rules intended to limit a governor's ability to make drastic changes in legislation. Under the revamp, still in effect today, before a sponsor can seek approval for an amendatory veto, the House Rules Committee must decide that the proposed changes do not alter the bill's fundamental purpose and are limited to the governor's objections to portions of a bill whose general merits he recognizes. Senate rules have included similar provisions since 2003.

Ironically, Madigan supported the amendatory veto concept as a delegate to the convention that drafted the 1970 Constitution, a decision he later conceded was a mistake.

During debate last month, some lawmakers invited a constitutional test as the House accepted the governor's first couple of rewrites. One would increase the homestead exemption for disabled veterans to \$1 million, effectively exempting most from property taxes, by adding language to a bill that originally changed the terms for a downstate redevelopment project. The other would rewrite a measure intended to allow some students with health problems to remain on their parents' health insurance. The

change would require insurance companies to offer dependent coverage in some cases up to age 30. While one could argue neither alters the underlying bill's fundamental purpose, both appear to make substantial changes and to expand the scope of the initial measures dramatically. Of course, the state Supreme Court would have the final word on whether they go too far, and only if a court challenge is filed.

Also worth noting is that despite the current buzz, Blagojevich has used the amendatory veto less frequently than his predecessors — and with a much poorer rate of success — according to records compiled by the General Assembly's fact-finding arm, the Legislative Research Unit.

Since 1971, when the current Constitution took effect, the five governors before Blagojevich issued 1,446 amendatory vetoes, roughly 45 a year, according to LRU figures. In his first five years in office, Blagojevich used the power 100 times, an average of 20 a

year. Adding in his 50-bill "Rewrite to Do Right" efforts would boost his annual rate to 28, still far short of every other governor but George Ryan, who averaged 19 in his only term. The leader, Thompson, penned some 65 amendatory vetoes a year during his record 14-year tenure, finally prompting Madigan to change the House rules.

Still, the Republican governor won acceptance for more than three-quarters of his revisions, despite facing Democratic majorities in both houses for 12 of his 14 years, and a Democratic Senate with a GOP House the other two. Lawmakers overrode 63 of his proposed changes — roughly 7 percent — the highest rejection rate of any of the five earlier chief executives. Overall, the quintet pushed through roughly 73 percent of their amendatory vetoes, usually with the opposition party controlling at least one legislative house.

Blagojevich, in contrast, won legislative approval for only 21 of his 100 amendatory vetoes in his first five years, a

success rate of 21 percent, by far the lowest of any governor since the rewrite power was enacted. Perhaps most notable among them was his 2003 effort to beef up ethics legislation, although legislators enacted still tougher provisions in a follow-up measure.

Lawmakers overrode 40, while an additional 39 died, meaning failure 79 percent of the time. His luck improved this year, however, with lawmakers backing three of the four he issued before the current blitz, including one that added free rides for seniors to the mass transit bailout approved in January.

Perhaps most startling, Blagojevich's dismal record comes despite Democratic majorities in both chambers since his 2003 inauguration. As the verbiage accompanying his "Rewrite" campaign makes clear, though, working with fellow Democrats is not the governor's strong suit.

Charles N. Wheeler III is director of the Public Affairs Reporting program at the University of Illinois at Springfield.

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